

マギクラフト マイスター

6

秋ぎつね



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Akigitsune



MAGI CRAFT MEISTER

- Volume 7 - ANCIENT RUINS

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[Translated by: subpar translations]





「……！」

「……そうそう、初めてとは思えないわ」

「おだてないでくださいよ」

「おだててなんかいないわ。
ジン君、ホントに上手。負けるわあ」



CHAPTER 1

CLEANING!

Spring, 18th of March.

Jin's group who had travelled to Egelia Kingdom's capital Asunto to participate in the golem party had gotten over the golem riot incident caused by [Subordination Rewriting Magic], and were travelling to the home country of Elsa and Reinhardt, Shouro Empire.

Because Reinhardt's work as a diplomat was also done with, they could travel without a care and en route they had lunch on a meadow filled with a field of flowers that closely resembled Chinese milk vetches.

After stopping for a night in the provincial city Rasure they returned to the main road, passed through the towns of Pean and Kaltor, then through the provincial city Buzzard, Fragrant Town, provincial cities Dogran and Desir, spending the night of the 24th in the town of Jiaral.

On the morning of the 25th, the group planned their next overnight stay and aimed to continue until the the town of Delead.

"Hm, did something happen?"

Before noon, at the end of the highway a person like a soldier seemed to be telling them to stop. Judging from their attire, they were a soldier on working for a provincial city.

"Is something wrong?"

As usual, Reinhardt who was riding in Jin's carriage was the representative and asked.

"Oh, I'm sorry but after this point the road has collapsed and become impassable. It looks like the repairs will take nearly ten days. So, please take a detour."

Because of the spring it rained a lot. Today was cloudy, but the day before yesterday it had rained. And probably because of that the road had caved in on its most weakest spots.

“No other choice then.”

Reinhardt's group wasn't familiar with the details of the side road. However, just the general knowledge should be enough, Reinhardt thought so this time Reinhardt had his coachman lead the way.

They asked for directions from the soldier, and the group then headed towards the side road led by the carriage Reinhardt's coachman drove.

The side road had a lot of bumps and it was narrow. To make matters worse the wheels dug deep into the road because of the rain, making travel hard.

Jin's carriage was comfortable, but Reinhardt who had returned to his own carriage that had dampers installed found that they didn't make much of a difference and soon went back to Jin's carriage.

“Sigh, Jin's carriage is the best!”

It seemed to be true that when people got a taste of luxury they couldn't easily return to their original life.

While they carried on like that, it once again began to rain.

“Oh, it's raining, that's bad.”

This area was a valley, and in a short time the rain was pouring full force. In the blink of an eye it had turned into a downpour.

At once the road turned into sludge and the ruts on the road disappeared too. The coachman driving the first carriage worked hard with choosing the way to go, and they continued.

However, because the way blended in with abandoned roads and animal trails, in the middle of the rain the group ended up going towards a completely wrong direction.



When the rain stopped it was afternoon. The view had finally cleared up, and the coachman driving the first carriage was in a panic.

“T-this is disastrous!”

In a hurry they got off the carriage and rushed to where Reinhardt was, that is, to Jin’s carriage.

“My apologies, Reinhardt-sama! It seems I chose the wrong road.”

The coachman apologized to Reinhardt, bowing so vigorously they almost prostrated themselves on the ground.

“Oi oi, what in the world is going on? Explain properly.”

“Y-yes. I saw a small village or a settlement ahead, but I was only told that we’d see the next town in the evening, there was no mention of a small village like this.

But Reinhardt didn’t get particularly angry either,

“Hmm, well, that was inevitable. If there’s a village then we ought to consider not forcing it and staying there overnight. Thinking about it, isn’t it better than getting lost in the same way again?”

The rain and the hard to distinguish road. Reinhardt wasn’t so narrow-minded as to reprimand the coachman because of just this. The coachman sighed in relief,

“In that case let us head towards that village.”

The group then headed for the small village.

“What an idyllic village.”

You could call it both a village or a hamlet, it was a truly small village. It looked like a village that scraped along and made its living by growing wheat things like that.

“Hmm, it’s not that far away from the highway so shouldn’t it be more lively.”

Even Reinhardt was puzzled.

“Well, no use thinking of it deeply.”

The group entered the village. Stakes had been set into the ground to easily mark the boundary, and the houses numbered no more than 20. The village was smaller than Kaina Village.

“Oh my, do we have visitors?”

When the carriages were stopped in an appropriate open space and they were looking at the surroundings, an old woman happened to pass by.

“Might you be from this village?”

Reinhardt’s butler asked and the old woman nodded.

“We’d like to spend the night in this village, so where might the village head’s house be?”

The butler asked in a polite manner, and the old lady pointed at one of the houses.

The village head was an aged gray-haired elder.

“As there’s no one but old people living in this village, we cannot provide any services to respected nobles’ group.”

“That’s fine, all we need is a place to sleep, water, and a some food if you’ve got any to spare.”

They had many portions of preserved food so the butler limited the requests to bare necessities.

“A place to sleep, huh...There are empty houses, if you’re fine with them.”

The village head said, stood up and led the group to the middle of the village where there were two stone houses that they could use.

“There may be a little dust.”

The village head said, but it wasn’t just a little.

“That’s a lot of dust. Young lady, you shouldn’t enter before the cleaning is finished.”

With Mine as the leader, along with the two maids Reinhardt had with him the three began the cleaning as a single group.

But cleaning a whole house was a rather big ordeal. Not to mention there was another house after that.

Jin couldn’t just watch and said,

“Reiko, could you give them a hand?”

Reiko suddenly appeared and nodded.

“I can handle this by myself.”

She said and quickly started on cleaning the other house.

Since she didn’t have to breathe, in the defiance of the flying dust,

“[Breeze].”

She blew up the dust with wind magic and ejected it out of the windows.

Jin who watched that clapped Reinhardt on the back.

“Hm? What is it, Jin?”

“Reinhardt, let’s make a ‘vacuum cleaner’.”



“So, like this, have it suck using wind magic.”

“Hmm, hmm.”

“You just need to filter the rubbish out of the inhaled air.”

“I see. Jin, your ideas are as surprising as always.”

Jin felt a bit guilty when Reinhardt praised him upfront. At any rate, it wasn’t his idea but the result of hundreds of years of accumulated technology from his previous world.

“Hm, what’s up?”

Reinhardt asked Jin who looked like he was brooding.

“Ah, nothing, I was just thinking about what material to use.”

“Mmh, that’s right. We’re on a trip so there’s not a lot of materials we can use.”

Jin lied. Nevertheless, the material was the biggest bottleneck.

“How’s this?”

Reinhardt took out an old leather bag.

“Uh, looks good. I found this.”

A rock had inadvertently caught Jin’s eye and looking at it with [Analyze] he found out that it contained a considerable amount of iron.

“In addition this looks like it could be used.”

Reinhardt also took out an old coat, so the two decided to give it a go at once.

“[Extraction], [Smelting].”

Jin separated the iron from the rock,

“[Forming], [Shaping], [Joint].”

And Reinhardt made a hose out of the leather back.

“Jin, is this okay?”

“Umm, can you make it a little bit thinner?”

“Alright, got it, [Forming].”

The leather would go through plastic deformation, so [Forming] was used.

Then Jin made the main part out of the iron he had separated. He wasn’t thinking of a cyclone-type, but a regular vacuum cleaner.

If you want to know why, it's because Jin has never used a cyclone-type vacuum cleaner.

If Reinhardt made the filter out of his old coat the rest would be easy.

The power would come from a Magi Stone. Jin had been carrying one from the start because he had thought it might be of some use.

In the first place the theory behind a vacuum cleaner is simple, so with Reinhardt's merry assistance in less than an hour the prototype vacuum cleaner was complete.

"Alright, let's give it a test."

And so they tried walking towards the houses they were borrowing when,

"Father, I've finished."

The house Reiko was responsible for had already been scrubbed clean.

That being the case, they went to the house Mine and the two maids were responsible for.

That house seemed to be only about halfway done so,

"Mine, try using this."

Reinhardt handed over the prototype vacuum cleaner.

"Reinhardt-sama, what is this?"

Reinhardt's maids also tilted their heads in doubt.

"It's called a 'vacuum cleaner'."

Reinhardt started it up with Magic Energy,

"It sucks in garbage and dust like this."

He gave a practice demonstration of the cleaning.

"Whoa!"

“That’s amazing!”

“It’s a real help!”

Each of the three were astonished, gave their thanks and immediately took the vacuum cleaner to use in cleaning the remaining rooms.



The cleaning was finished at around 5 PM. It was around the time the spring sun set.

Even so, while the houses were small they had bathtubs, all present –especially the maids who had been dirtied by the cleaning– were relieved to be able to take a bath as a reward for their hard work.

CHAPTER 2

DEPOPULATION

“Now then, there’s something I want to talk to you about.”

This was after they had finished bathing and had had dinner.

Reinhardt had gathered the whole group, that is Jin and Reiko, Elsa, her nanny Mine, butler Adberg and guard Herman. In addition, in the same room were Reinhardt’s own butler and two maids.

He was in his serious mode.

“Have you noticed anything strange?”

He asked. Jin thought a bit and said,

“Well, I thought it was a little unenergetic for a village.”

Reinhardt nodded and,

“Oh, that’s no wonder. After all this is a village where only elderly people live.”

He said. Jin frowned while listening and muttered,

“Depopulation advances in this place too, huh...”

“Depopulation?”

Elsa caught that and asked Jin. She looked puzzled.

“Ah, umm. People gradually disappearing, I guess.”

“That’s right.”

Reinhardt took it from there.

“To maintain population, each married couple needs to have no less than two children. You know that, right Elsa?”

“Mm.”

“Considering the mortality rate of infants and conscription, infectious diseases and such things, three would be preferred, is my opinion as a statesman.”

Jin came to realize that Reinhardt wanted to say something.

“To speak plainly, this village has become unable to maintain its population.

After that, Reinhardt began talking with a rather severe look on his face.

“To begin with, around twenty years ago, the neighboring Celuroa Kingdom was meddling with the surrounding countries.”

Maybe he wanted to soften the serious talk a bit, as he mixed in some light words.

“The motive behind it, well, most likely no one but the previous King of Celuroa himself knew it, and you can’t ask someone who’s buried underground so this is only conjecture.”

He said and threw a glance at Elsa, then Mine,

“You could say that basically it was to widen his territory, however, it wasn’t anything small.”

Reinhardt paused to take a breath and,

“He wanted to annex every country on the continent.”

He told it bluntly.

“That’s the Unifilers’...”

Jin began to talk, and Reinhardt nodded.

“That’s right. At that time the Unifilers already had that ideal. The current King of Celuroa doesn’t appear to be as ambitious as his predecessor. But in truth, he’s a person with ambitions no less weaker than his predecessor, from my perspective. The predecessor was easy to understand but the current King... To tell you the truth, I can’t see through him. But there’s no way he doesn’t aspire to rule the other countries. Most likely he’s just gathering power for now.”

He then looked at Elsa a second time,

“Anyway, during the three-year period between precisely 21 years ago to 18 years ago the previous King of Celuroa assailed Egelia Kingdom and Frantz Kingdom. Maybe because our Shouro Empire doesn’t trace its roots back to Dinar Kingdom, they didn’t really attack us. However, there was a period when for the sake of self-defense we couldn’t avoid dispatching troops to Celuroa Kingdom.”

Then Jin also understood it.

“I see, and so that time was the cause of the depopulation of this village.”

“Well, that’s how it is. Also, Elsa, I’ve heard that it was in those days that your father rose to the top with his merits.”

When Reinhardt said that, Mine’s expression contorted for a moment, but there was no one who noticed it.

“Father, did.”

“Yeah. The story I heard from your uncle was that when he was in Egelia Kingdom as the commanding officer of a battallion stationed there, he kept back the Celuroan army over three times the size of his, and that he kept the damage to friendly troops and the surrounding inhabitants to a minimum.

“Eh, Elsa’s father’s an amazing person, isn’t he.”

That was Jin’s honest opinion, but when Mine heard it her she once more grimaced. But, as she was hanging her head down no one noticed as always.

“During the war with Celuroa Kingdom’s army a great many military personnel and soldiers died, and apparently among them was Louis’s... Earl Kuzuma’s father.”

Jin understood with just that explanation.

“Oh, so it’s because of that that Earl Kuzuma inherited the house so young.”

Reinhardt nodded with a firm look on his face.

“That’s right. And the soldiers were conscripted from all around. Most likely this was

one of the places. It looks like all the men that were capable to fight aged 20 to 40 were conscripted.”

Counting backwards, people who were over 40 back then would be around 60 now. You can understand why this village had no one but elderly people.

“I heard that the troops were organized into companies by village. There must’ve also been companies that were completely annihilated. This village is one of them.”

Reinhardt said with a sigh. Jin’s mood also turned gloomy, but one question popped to his mind.

“Then, what about the wives of the conscripted men and the children in their teens?”

He asked, and Reinhardt replied looking sad,

“They probably abandoned the village.”

“Abandoned the...”

“This is north of Egelia Kingdom’s capital, if Celuroa Kingdom’s army was to attack this would surely turn into a battleground. To the luck of the remaining families it looks like this place wasn’t exposed to the horrors of war, but nevertheless the mothers with children escaped considering the worst-case scenario.”

“ ... ”

Silence filled the room.

“Sorry for the somewhat depressing talk. But, Elsa, you’re already 17, so I think you ought to learn a bit about the world, not to mention about the time that your father took part in.”

He then faced Jin said,

“Jin, I had you listen because I wanted you to know about it and I wanted to know your opinion about something.”

“My opinion?”

“Yeah. Earlier you said “depopulation”, right? In other words, that must mean you’ve

seen or otherwise know of communities like this village? I thought that if that's the case, then as a statesman I'd like to ask you to teach me about what kind of countermeasures were taken, if you know of any."

Reinhardt was also a member of the nobility, and a statesman at that.

He was again worried about the hard reality of this world's population shortage. He thought it necessary to discover means of lessening it, even just a bit.

When so asked, Jin called to mind the memory of a TV programme about a depopulated village of the elderly he had seen while on Earth.

"Well, let's see."

While searching his mind Jin spoke bit by bit.

"First of all, livelihood, right. Without work to earn a living people won't gather."

"Hmm, that's true. Please continue."

Reinhardt also agreed.

"Without places that appeal to young people not a lot of immigration will happen, don't you agree?"

There were many regions where arable land remained. He meant some reason for saying 'I want to live here'.

"I can also understand that. Anything specific?"

Jin remembered news about what some municipality somewhere had done,

"First would be a tax reduction, I guess. Something like for five years it's a some percentage lighter."

He adapted it for this world and explained.

"I see! During that five years they'll settle down permanently. That's a good idea."

"Next would be, something like reducing the tax a little according to the amount of children."

Reinhardt began smiling in admiration.

“Excellent. I also thought of that. Jin, don’t you think you’ve got the talent to be a statesman?”

He praised Jin highly. Jin shook his head and,

“No no, you’re making too much of a man like me who’s only good at building things.”

He said, flustered. Because all of that was second-hand knowledge anyhow.

After that they exchanged various stories and opinions, and when the evening grew late each of the retired to their rooms.



That night, Jin was in unusually deep thought while lying on the bed.

(Me building all kinds of things is also something I completely got from my predecessor.)

He tossed and turned in bed.

(The explanations I made that seemed excellent to Reinhardt and the others weren’t my achievements, but thanks to the education I received in modern Japan.)

He felt vaguely depressed.

(What’s the best I myself can do?)

Deep in his dreams, Jin ran swiftly as if looking for the thing he liked and wanted to do, this was his first time since coming to this world that he had pondered about what he ought to do in this world.

CHAPTER 3

SIDE STORY 4:

NINJA UNIT

And here's what Reiko was up to on the other hand.

She had noticed that ever since the 18th when they left the capital strange people were following them.

On the night of the 19th. Clouds.

Behind the hotel in the town of Kaltor.

One person was rendered helpless.

(Because Father dislikes killing.)

It had been fortuious for the person who ended up as the target that they got away with just simple bone fractures on both legs.

On the night of the 20th. Rain.

In the dead of night, in the hallway of a lodging house for visitors of the provincial city Buzzard.

Two people were rendered helpless.

(I see that the hair color's different than that of yesterday's person. Could several groups be sending shadows like this?)

After stunning the two she had stripped them naked and tossed them out on the main road.

On the night of the 21st. Light rain.

On the second floor of the inn in Fragrant town.

One person was rendered helpless.

(Every day, is it. I should arrange for additional means of protection for Father.)

This person had been tied up and hung from the watch tower near the town.

And then on the night of the 22nd. Rain.

In the lodging house for visitors of the provincial city Dogran.

(It looks like they aren't coming tonight, but I cannot be careless.)

Reiko then activated [ManaCom].

“(Yes, Luna speaking.)”

Reiko's little sister, support-duty golem Luna immediately responded.

“Luna, come over here using the Warp Gate.”

“(Yes, Elder Sister.)”

Luna soon arrived teleporting through the Warp Gate installed in Jin's deluxe carriage.

“Elder sister, you called.”

“Thank you for coming. I'll be going to the research laboratory now. I'll be back by the morning, I'll leave protecting Father in the meanwhile to you. You can do it, right?”

“Yes, Elder Sister.”

And like that, Reiko moved to Hourai Island.



“Reiko-san, welcome home. How may I help you tonight?”

Hourai Island’s supervising magical intelligence ‘Laozi’ greeted her.

“Laozi, I have to consult you in regards to Father’s safety.”

“Ask ahead.”

Reiko and Laozi monitored each other to keep the other from behaving wildly, but it’s not like they had a bad relationship. Even less when talking about Jin.

Reiko explained everything in detail that had happened since the golem riot incident to Laozi. Laozi listened closely, and when Reiko’s talk was over,

“I understand. Elradrite, and [Subordination Rewriting Magic], was it, this does indeed sound like a nuisance. I’ll take deal with all of the golems here. Shielding and a Magi Recorder, right?”

“I’ll leave it to you.”

“And after that, about My Lord’s bodyguards.”

“That’s the number one problem, isn’t it.”

After that, for a while Reiko continued discussing the details.

“We’ll do that, and have you come to a decision about if it’s alright to install ManaComs to each of the golems?”

“Yes. Myself I’ll ask Father to install one for me, but please do it for everyone excepting me, Laozi.”

“Understood. There are many of them, so I’ll have them remodeled starting with with Soleil, Luna, Planetarium, and Satella, after whom I’ll do the numbered golems in ascending order.”

“That should be fine.”

Jin had already had internal ManaComs on his mind, and that being the case they took this chance to do the whole remodeling in one go.

“So, about building Father’s bodyguards, the Secret Police (SP), have you come to a decision?”

“Yes. Nonetheless, if we’re to build high-grade golems like that, we better get My Lord’s permission for it.”

“That’s exactly right. I’ll try consulting Father tomorrow.”

“Please do.”

Finally, they exchanged trivial news.

“Lately My Lord has not been in contact with me, so records have been piling up. Could I have them conveyed through you, Reiko-san?”

“That’s alright.”

He had Reiko report about the current completion of the map, about the repulsion of devil beasts that had approached and the materials gathered from them.

When the meeting was over it was already late at night. Reiko at once returned back to Jin.

Using the Warp Gate, without any time loss she returned to the provincial city of Dogran. It had stopped raining.

“Welcome back, Elder Sister. This person was seeking Father’s bedroom so I captured them.”

Luna said and pointed at a man bound by rope. His face was swollen and he was unconscious. Reiko gave him a glance and then lost interest,

“Good work, Luna. I’ll handle the rest. You go back. Although it’s unfortunate you don’t get to talk with Father.”

“Yes, Elder Sister. Give Father my regards.”

And so Luna went back to Hourai Island. The caught man was left tied as is behind the lodging house.



The next day, Reiko tried talking to Jin about the SP. Then,

“Haha, I wanted to make something like that too. I suppose it’s pitiful to have you by yourself as my bodyguard at night, Reiko..”

No not at all, Reiko said, but Jin seemed to already have thought of an idea,

“Alright, tonight let’s quickly go back to the research laboratory to build them. ...Ahh, I don’t have anyone to use as a reference for covert conduct, do I?”

Jin said and looked troubled so Reiko said,

“Oh, Father, if that’s the problem then I know just the right talent for it.”

“Eh?”

Reiko then told him about the man tied up and left behind the lodging house.

“Hmm, people like him came as I thought, huh. The SP looks to be necessary after all. I got it. I’ll have his behavioral patterns and such.”

He secretly went around to the back of the building where the man was still unconscious. That was convenient, so Jin used [Transfer Info] while the man was like that.

“[Transfer Info] Level 4.”

All at once he transcribed the knowledge of espionage activities, behavior, movements, and even organizational information to a Magi Crystal he held.

After analyzing it later, maybe he’d even get to know whence the man was dispatched from.

Furthermore it was coincidental, completely by chance, but in any case after yesterday’s pursuer’s failure their organization had dispatched their top-class man. Even though she was easily caught by Luna.

However, thanks to that Jin got rather, or should I say befittingly high-grade data on

espionage to use in golems.

Night of the 23rd, rain.

In the lodging house for visitors of the provincial city Desir where the group was staying overnight.

In the middle of the night, just when the rain let up, Jin secretly snuck out of his room and headed towards the storehouse for carriages. Maybe because the organization was being vigilant after having their top-class agent beaten it looked like there were no suspicious people tonight.

Using the Warp Gate hidden inside the carriage Jin and Reiko teleported to Hourai island in an instant.

The time difference between Hourai Island and provincial city Desir appeared to be around three and a half hours. And that's why over here it was also nighttime, but for golems there is no night or day.

"Welcome home, Father, Elder sister."

Reiko's assistant golems, Soleil and Luna greeted them.

"Ah, I'm home. I may be hasty, but are the preparations complete?"

The one who answered that was Laozi.

"My Lord, welcome home. Yes, the preparation of all kinds of materials is complete."

"I see, thanks for your trouble."

Jin said and moved to the research laboratory.

First he'd add a ManaCom function to Reiko. As the basic equipment was already finished, this was finished quickly.

The real performance was the SP.

On top of their features, as being as light as possible was good he made their skeletons out of hollowed Light Silver, and their exterior out of Light Silver too.

Now, what do about the appearance. I'll have the surface colored black. That should do, Jin answered his own question in his head and nodded.

Male-type, or female-type. Adult or child.

Soon the answer came to him.

To have them be able to deal in any kind of setting, making all of them would be good.

It took that night and the next one for Jin's personal 'Hourai Island Security Police', alias 'Ninja Unit' to be born.

There were ten members. Five varieties, two of each.

Two little girl-type golems same as Reiko. 'Pansy' and 'Viola'.

'Dahlia' and 'Canna' who had approximately the same figure as Elsa (however, their bosoms were a bit larger).

Adult female-types 'Lily' and 'Rose'.

Standard adult male-types 'Elm' and 'Ash'.

And finally the young boy-types 'Pothos' and 'Heath'.

"Alright then, please take care of me."

Jin faced the 'Hourai Island SP' he created and said.

"Yes, Father."

They greeted him all at once.

CHAPTER 4

WHISTLING

The next morning after they stayed in the depopulated village the weather had cleared.

“Aah, I haven’t seen clear blue skies in a while.”

Jin stretched his limbs and inhaled the refreshing morning air.

“Good morning.”

Reinhardt had also woken up.

“It looks like we’ll be surely be able to get to Delead from here before the day is over.”

Breakfast centered on preserved foods. Still, they were able to get some fresh vegetables to add a little color to their food.

After the meal that was plainer than usual, the group departed the depopulated village whose name they didn’t even know. Of course, they thanked the village head aplenty.

There was nothing strangers like Jin’s group could do to this village at the moment. They departed with painful reluctance.

And yet the sky was blue and the rays of the sun warm. You could say that spring was in full swing already. As they continued moving their moods also cleared up.

“The wind feels nice, doesn’t it.”

Jin’s carriage’s roof also had ventilation openings so they were able to comfortably ventilate. Reinhardt who was riding with them was also relaxing. Elsa was unusually for her nodding off.

Jin was talking with Reinhardt in a low voice so as not to wake up Elsa.

“Hey, Reinhardt. Is there a Guild in the town we’re going to this time?”

The Guild Jin was asking about was obviously the Guild for Magi Craftsmen.

“Hm? Probably not, I guess. Not without being at least a provincial city.”

“Is that so.”

It appeared that the town was still too small for the organization.

“Do you have some business there?”

Reinhardt asked, and Jin answered,

“Mh-hm, I was thinking about promoting the ‘vacuum cleaner.’”

“Hmm.”

Jin explained to Reinhardt that as the vacuum cleaner is a Magi Tool useful for commoners and nobles alike, if possible he’d like to have it get popular and in addition be as cheap as possible.

“That’s unbeneficial for you who helped me though, Reinhardt.”

When Jin said so, Reinhardt laughed and told him not to mind about something like that and,

“I don’t think that your way of thinking is bad, Jin. You’ve got my support.”

He said some such, then Jin bowed his head to Reinhardt and,

“Thank you.”

He said. Reinhardt then asked Jin,

“In that case, you must be on the common people’s faction’s side?”

“Common people’s faction?”

It wasn’t a word he was used to hearing. Actually, ‘common people’s faction’ was something Jin didn’t know of.

“Oh, there’s a categorization of common people’s faction and chosen people’s faction.

People in the common people's faction obviously want to have Magi Tools universally spread throughout the masses. And so what does that mean for the special people's faction?"

"I guess it must be that they want to monopolize them for only a selected part of the population."

"That's exactly right."

"And Reinhardt, you're which?"

Jin asked and waited for Reinhardt's answer. That answer could change how Jin behaved from now on.

"I'm of course..."

"Rai-nii is of the common people's faction. Because of that he got into quarrels with Uncle."

Elsa answered from the side.

"Oi, Elsa, don't steal the words from my mouth."

Reinhardt laughed, and on that subject,

"That's because it's boring when you two talk by yourselves."

Elsa said and looked just a little miffed about it.

"No, that was because looked to be sleeping comfortably, Elsa."

When told so Elsa got worked up,

"Liar. As if I would fall asleep."

She said, and

"The weather's good today, I guess this is why they say 'in spring one sleeps a sleep that knows no dawn.'"

Jin said.

"What's that?"

Elsa asked with a puzzled look on her face. Reinhardt also looked interested.

“Let’s see, If I remember correctly, it means something like ‘it is comfortable to sleep during spring, and so when morning comes you keep on sleeping without noticing’.”

Jin replied. It was in fact Chinese poetry, but Japanese and classical literature weren’t Jin’s best subjects, and so he couldn’t explain any further.

“Hmm, ‘in spring one sleeps a sleep that knows no dawn’, huh. That’s rather accurate. It perfectly suits sleepyhead Elsa.”

Reinhardt poked fun at Elsa who blushed and,

“I’m not a sleepyhead. Rai-nii is rude.”

She pouted and turned away from him.

As the talk had gone completely off-topic, Jin said,

“A-anyways, I was thinking about making the structure and manufacturing method of the ‘vacuum cleaner’ available to the public. If I did that, then anyone could...I mean, any Magi Craftsman could build one, right?”

But Reinhardt had a complicated look on his face.

“Hmm, even so, that’s not going to happen. It is correct that the Magi Craftsmen’s Guild is ahead in transmitting information, but the treatment of that information varies Guild by Guild...”

He had a rather unclear reply.

“What do you mean?”

Jin asked and,

“Basically, the Guild would consider that monopolizing that technology would bring them profits. That sort of thing didn’t happen in Blue Land’s Guild where we went to earlier, though.”

Reinhardt explained. In other words, he meant that the way received information was handled varied in every Guild.

“Hmm, is that so. That’s a problem, huh.”

Jin let out a single sigh.

“ ... ”

His own meaning for living in this world. Just when Jin seemed to be about to find it he stumbled.

He felt vaguely weaker, he vaguely gazed out of the window, and he vaguely started whistling.

(Come to think of it, I think this is the first time I’ve whistled since coming to this world.)

Maybe he didn’t have the spare time, or he had simply forgotten to, but in any case Jin whistled for the first time in a while.

The melody was a pop music song from the latter period of Showa era. It was a song his orphanage director loved so he remembered the tune well.

While whistling he reminisced about those days.

Jin had been a part-time senior high school student.

Usually, when you were of senior high school age you’d leave the orphanage, but the orphanage director seemingly had wanted Jin to be his successor and so the director had had Jin commute to school from the orphanage. The surname of ‘Nidoh’ must’ve also been an indication of that desire.

During that school commute, Jin had often whistled. The tunes had been from songs the orphanage director had collected on their cassette tapes.

(Was I fired up with aspirations back then? Or was that just a reflection of me wanting to earn a salary soon?)

In any case, it was a world he could no longer go back to, a life he couldn’t return to. Jin now had no other option than to live on in this world.

(Making this world more pleasant to live in is presumptuous. However, if it’s just

where my hands reach. I can do that much.)

In those days, Jin had thought things like ‘i want to make the orphanage a finer place’, or ‘I want to buy many different toys for the youngsters and children’.

(My predecessor was researching combining magic and tools. At that time it had been unacceptable, but today it’s accepted in the form of so-called Magi Craftsmen. I’m...)

After he had thought that far, the song was over, and so his whistling also stopped.

“Jin, what was that song just now?”

“I’ve never heard that before. It was a good tune.”

Reinhardt and Elsa spoke well of it.

Jin decided that some day for sure he’ll stop hiding his true identity from these two and speak about it honestly.

But as of yet, he didn’t have the courage to do so.

Jin was afraid of being treated as a heretic and rejected by his friends in this world, like his predecessor had been cast out by her colleagues.

Jin didn’t call himself a Magi Craft Meister as a result of having inherited his predecessor’s memories and experiences of being persecuted.

CHAPTER 5

ISOLATED

In the town of Delead, they stayed overnight at a fairly high-class inn. It was a sturdy stone-built three-storey building with a flat rooftop.

During the night, Jin for some reason or another couldn't sleep and left his room, then tried going up the stairs to the rooftop. Small lights gave off enough light to let him somehow see where he was walking.

Stars were twinkling in the spring night sky.

"Ooh, what a pretty night sky. Even though I don't know the constellations here."

Jin who was looking up at the starry sky began to feel unusually sentimental. Then,

"Reiko, you're here, right?"

"Yes, Father."

Reiko, the faithful Automata always protecting Jin, undid her [Stealth] magic and appeared.

"Come over here."

"Yes."

Jin who had become somewhat lonely called Reiko to his side, and gently stroked her head.

"Father?"

Reiko raised a puzzled voice due to Jin's slightly unusual state.

"Mh, yeah. You're always by my side, so."

"Yes, that's because it's my reason for being."

"Hehe, you always say that, don't you. Well, it's fine, just stay by my side always."

“Yes, of course.”

It was dark so Jin couldn't see well, but at that moment Reiko had an extraordinary smile on her face.

“ ”

Suddenly a song flowed out of Jin's lips. A song he had for some reason forgotten about until now.

The ending theme of a story about a group headed west in search of a sutra. This was also from the orphanage director's collection, but he had heard the tune from a video tape, not a cassette tape.

“Father...”

Reiko held Jin's hand. She hoped that would remove at least a bit of Jin's loneliness.

“ ”

Jin stopped singing, and then.

From behind he could hear the sound of footsteps. Reiko quickly turned around and prepared for combat..., but.

“Jin, kun?”

It was Elsa. Apparently as her room was on the third floor, she had heard Jin's voice and had come up.

“Elsa? What's wrong?”

Jin asked.

“That's my line. What's wrong, Jin-kun?”

“Do you even need to ask. Somehow I couldn't sleep”

Getting such an answer, Elsa gave Jin a searching look and then,

“Huh.”

Her reaction was that of more or less accepting the answer.

“So, that song just now was?”

“Something or the other.”

As if she wasn't satisfied with that answer, Elsa showed a deeply pondering attitude then,

“Jin-kun, lonely?”

She guessed exactly right at Jin's feelings, didn't she.

“Eh?”

As it was dark she couldn't see Jin's flustered and troubled face, but he was still clearly confused. By no means did he expect Elsa to say what she just said.

“W-why?”

With a slightly nervous voice he answered with a question, and,

“Because I've been like that.”

Elsa spoke.

“Father is military personnel so he's seldom home. Mother has a weak constitution so she doesn't leave her room much. My brothers are so much older than me that we don't really see eye to eye.”

He had previously heard of Elsa's family structure, but hearing it again either way made him feel for her.

“There's no way Rai-nii either could always play with me. Especially after he became a diplomat we've not been able to meet often.”

No doubt she didn't have many friends of her own age. The cause of her not being very good at conversing must've been that too, Jin thought.

“When I was lonely, I wanted to get all the more solitary. Then I would remember the time I had fun.”

“By times you had fun, you mean...”

“When I was little. When I played with, or no, when my brothers and Rai-nii played with me.”

As expected, childhood memories seem to be special for everyone, Jin once again thought. The childish days when you knew nothing and only spent time playing.

In Jin’s case it had been an extremely short time, but certainly it had been like that.

“Jin-kun is a great Magi Craftsman. Even so, for that reason you’re isolated.”

Tonight, Elsa was frightfully sharp.

“...Is what Rai-nii said.”

But in fact it seems it was Reinhardt’s opinion told second-hand.

“Rai-nii said. The only people who can make up for isolation are the ones who share the same feeling.”

“...Elsa.”

Jin was surprised that such a speech came out of Elsa’s mouth. However,

“...But, what did he mean?”

In any case, Elsa was Elsa.

Jin’s vaguely serious feelings had left somewhere. He once again looked at the night sky, then at Elsa.

“Aren’t you cold?”

Looking closely, in the middle of the darkness, Elsa was wearing only her nightwear.

“Mm. I’m fine.”

Even so, Jin removed his coat and put it on Elsa.

“Thanks. Jin-kun is always kind.”

Elsa thanked Jin and closed the front of the coat. Jin then said to her,

“Hey, during the day, we talked about the common people’s faction and chosen

people's factions, but are they in a bad conflict?"

"Nothing like that. Our country is mostly of the common people's faction. Only a part of the nobles are of the chosen people's faction."

According to Elsa's explanation, part of the nobles who employ Magi Engineers = Magi Craftsmen try to monopolize technology.

"They're just immersed in their superiority complex."

Elsa cut them down to size.

"But, Jin-kun hates something like that, right?"

"Yeah. Just building things that are liked is enough, but when people accept them gladly it makes you happy. That's the time when you're likely to be rewarded for your work."

"Rai-nii also said something like that."

Elsa then stopped talking and cast her eyes down as if hesitating to say something, but eventually like she had readied herself she raised her head and,

"Although Rai-nii told me not to talk about this."

With that preface,

"I want Jin-kun to come to Shouro Empire. Then I want you to build many things that are liked, and things that are helpful."

She then blushed just a bit,

"...Jin-kun, the look on your face when you build things, I like it."

Elsa said, turned around and,

"Good night."

She left the rooftop with those parting words.

"Things that are liked, and things that are helpful, huh."

Jin who was left by himself muttered to himself. For some reason Reiko wasn't in sight.

"To get rid of isolation, to settle down, is what it means, right."

Right now Jin was alone. He didn't belong to any country.

"Well, I did plan to sooner or later live in some country, but."

His original intention behind touring countries during this trip came out.

"Shouro Empire, huh."



Speaking of Reiko, at that time.

"Elder Sister, there was a man like this."

She received a report from the 'Hourai Island SP' alias 'Ninja unit'.

"A nuisance night by night, aren't they. It would surely be a bother to expressly report this to Father, so please handle the disposal by yourselves."

"Yes, understood."

CHAPTER 6

SIDE STORY 5:

KAINA VILLAGE, IT'S BEEN A WHILE

Just now, Jin had come to Kaina Village.

That was because he vaguely reminisced, and vaguely felt the want to try going.

He took the carriage's Warp Gate first to Hourai Island, and from there to the Warp Gate in the shelter that had been established on the outskirts of Kaina Village.

In Kaina Village too it was night.

The weather had been clear in Delead, but here it was slightly cloudy. A vaguely lukewarm air, typical of a spring night.

"Everyone's already asleep, huh..."

With no entertainments or pleasures, the night in farmwork-centric Kaina Village was shot. When the sun went down almost all of the families went to sleep.

With the moonlight coming from a rift between the clouds he could somehow see the road. By himself, Jin walked down the nostalgic road.

"Martha-san, Hannah...I wonder if they're doing okay."

Quietly, Jin peeked into Martha's house over the fence. Jin could see Hannah's room through the muscovite window he had installed.

He wanted to take a look, but after rethinking it doing such a degenerate's action would be bad, so after walking around the house he really had lingering attachments towards he moved on.

He went to the location of the pump. To the place where the first useful tool Jin had built using Craft Magic was installed.

"It still works perfectly, huh."

Jin softly moved the pump's handle. With its durability raised with [Hardening] the pump had barely worn down at all. Jin let go of the handle satisfied.

Next he headed towards the hot spring.

The hot bath made the sound of a free-flowing hot spring even in the middle of the night.

While it had been just a cabin with a tidy shingle roof, the whole building had been reconstructed to be sturdy. That must've been because of how much the villagers appreciated the facility.

Peering inside, Jin found that on the hole he had dug some hot-spring mineral deposits had accumulated and so he removed them with Craft Magic.

In the sedimentation tank that settled the fresh water and dirtied bath water, mud had piled up so using [Decomposition] and [Cleanup] he made it stay clean.

Jin kept walking around the village. He set out to the public square, where in spite of the gloomy moonlight light pink flowers were in full bloom.

"Kherry blooms, huh. They really are exactly like cherries."

While he had been in Japan, they had been the flowers he loved the most. Jin stayed like that for a while, gazing up at the Kherries in full bloom.

"Master."

Jin was brought back to reality by a voice calling out his name. Turning around, in front of Jin was,

"Gen."

The golem Gen. It looked like he was on midnight patrol.

"How may I help you tonight?"

“Mm, I just wanted to watch the Kherries bloom.”

Even though the other party wasn't someone he particularly had to hide things from, Jin felt vaguely embarrassed and answered like that.

Then he suddenly realized something.

“Gen, how is Gon doing?”

“Yes, he is similarly going around defending the village.”

When Jin heard that he said,

“Alright, in that case let's do it in turns. First, Gen, follow me.”

“Yes.”

The thing Jin had realized was that Gen and Gon hadn't yet received the countermeasures for [Subordination Rewriting Magic]. The same went for the horse golems.

Jin then left Kaina Village posthaste to make sure that the golems there would have countermeasures installed.



“Laozi, you've gathered the components necessary for [Subordination Rewriting Magic] countermeasure together, right?”

“Yes, My Lord. The countermeasures of all the golems in Hourai Island have been taken care of, and 100 sets of spare parts have been prepared.”

“Alright, I'll immediately add the countermeasures to this here 'Gon'. After that, 'Gen', then the five horse golems.”

“Understood.”

Jin then installed the Subordination Rewriting Magic countermeasures to Gen with the support of Laozi. At the same time he tuned and optimized the Magi Device, and performed full-body maintenance.

Because of that Gen's output increased by around eight percent. Comprehensively

looking at his current state, he could put out about 30 percent of Reiko's power.

Furthermore, he added the [Stealth] function, as an improvement to make him able to secretly protect the village.

"Alright Gen, go back to the village and tell Gon to come over here."

"Yes, master."

He then gave Gon the same treatment. And then to the horse golems Ein, Zwei, Drei, Quatre, and Cinq too; Jin breathed a sigh of relief.

"In the unlikely event that Kaina Village got attacked it could've been disastrous, so."

By the way, he didn't add the [Stealth] function to the horses.

Once all the improvements were completed, Jin once more warped to Kaina Village.

Near the shelter on the village outskirts where the Warp Gate was flowed the Elume river.

This time Jin tried going to Elume river.

On the dry riverbed, finally spring's weeds had begun sprouting. While treading on the riverbed's sand Jin broke into a nostalgic smile..

"Oh yeah, we played some underwater tag in those depths. If I'm not mistaken, it was around that time I found a Magi Stone mixed in the sand."

Using that Jin had built a stove, and sold it to the merchant Roland.

"It somehow feels like the distant past, but is it only like three months that have passed since then?"

Jin felt that a lot had happened, and Jin reminisced about the things he'd done after he had left Kaina Village.

"I encountered Beana in Blue Land, we made popcorn, built the refrigerator, met with Earl Kuzuma, and Reiko got into a scuffle."

He remembered the fond memories.

“In Port Rock I made a golem boat, quarreled with a Death Serpent, and began the trip with Reinhardt and the others.”

It was like yesterday, and it was also like in the remote past.

“I built a kite, we caught some thieves, developed Kunlun Island, built Lotte, oh yes, there was also that golem riot.”

Jin’s mental state turned into wanting to mutter a line out of an anime show like ‘Everything about it...is precious’.

Meanwhile, the eastern skies were turning slightly brighter.

Kaina Village was much more to the east than the town of Delead where Jin’s group was currently spending the night, so the sun rose earlier.

“Any time now the early families will get out of bed, huh.”

Jin muttered and began walking towards the shelter where the Warp Gate was.

“I’ll be back.”

Jin shouted out to no one in particular and entered the shelter, and warped to Hourai Island with the Warp Gate installed inside.



In Delead, it was still night.

Jin who returned via Hourai Island quietly returned to his room in the inn and slipped into his bed.

Then he would have a short sleep until morning.

Jin didn’t know that his faithful unparalleled Automata Reiko had followed after him all this time.

“Father...Is satisfied now, right?”

Reiko muttered while looking at sleeping Jin's content face.

Morning was still hours away, and stars were twinkling over the town of Delead.

CHAPTER 7

YADA VILLAGE

Next day, before leaving the town of Delead, Reinhardt told Jin he had something he wanted to discuss.

“The fact is, north of this town there are some ancient ruins called the ruins of Keuwan, and apparently they date back to before the Great Magic War. I’ve not seen them myself, you see.”

He began to talk. Jin also had an interest in the ruins from the time of the great war.

“It’ll be a small detour, but I’m not on official business anymore, so we could go. I’m rather interested in seeing them.”

Reinhardt said, and Jin also agreed.

“Alright, in that case, how about Elsa? Do you want to hurry back to our country?”

Reinhardt asked Elsa, and sure enough,

“I’m also interested. I want to go there.”

She replied. Reinhardt clapped his hands together and,

“Alright, it’s decided. I’ll have the coachman get directions there.”

He said and got off his seat.



The carriages left Delead Town, and headed along the highway to a provincial city called Uremlin.

In Uremlin too there was a Guild, but making the technology of the vacuum cleaner available for the public was postponed. Because the place felt somehow rough. Jin planned to reveal it to the public after he could confirm that the Guild was more trustworthy.

After spending a night there they headed off the highway to the north. After half a day they arrived at the town of Coorz. As there was still time, they headed farther north , and by evening, they had arrived at Yada Village.

“This is Yada Village.”

First Reinhardt got down from Jin’s carriage, and then Jin followed,

“I heard it while inside the carriage, but there’s a mine here, huh.”

He said while looking up at the mine tunnel to the northwest.

“If I remember right, they say that many kinds of gemstones are mined here.”

The last to get down was Elsa. As expected of a young woman, she apparently had an interest in jewelry.

Jin looked at his surroundings to survey the state of the village. Then he voiced his opinion,

“It’s quite lively for being called a village.”

There were enough buildings to call it a town, and there was a lot of people too.

The one to answer Jin’s doubts was of course Reinhardt.

“That’s because there’s no agriculture here, this town only has the mine and tourism. The people related to the mines are mostly from Uremlin, and tourists aren’t residents. The original inhabitants seem to make their living by managing inns or small stores.”

In other words, as the base population was small this place was treated as a village.

“From here, just short of 20 kilometers following the mountain road northeast is Keune Village. I hear that the ruins of Keuwan are there.”

Reinhardt explained,

“Apparently Keune Village is a really small village, so they say it’s better to stay the nights here and make round trips there.”

Reinhardt spoke the advice he had heard while in Delead Town.

“Well, we can take it easy today.”

He said and watched the butler he had had go ahead arrive.

“Claude, thanks for your trouble.”

The butler Claude bowed and,

“Reinhardt-sama, let me guide you to the inn.”

Then the group once more got on the carriages, and headed to tonight’s inn guided by Claude.

The inn was in a silent place on the outskirts of the village. It was a solidly-built 4-storey stone building. The guest rooms all faced towards the mountainside, so the view was good.

The room felt a little small, but it wasn’t enough to call it inconvenient. As a whole, the inn got a passing mark.

“Oh, I wonder if you can see the mine from the window.”

These windows hadn’t been fitted with glass. It had wooden doors, which Jin opened and looked outside. The view of the mountain with the mine was good.

Incidentally, the evening sun had just then sunk precisely behind the mountain with the mine.

The dinner was soup with bread, roasted freshwater fish, roasted something that resembled chicken, edible wild plants made into a salad and some such.

Elsa didn’t seem to have an appetite and it bothered Jin. Then,

“Elsa, are you feeling ill?”

He tried asking. Elsa replied,

“I dislike Cockalisk meat.”

Apparently the chicken-like meat was from something called a Cockalisk. Jin then,

“If you don’t like it you don’t have to force yourself to eat it. Because if you just ask, I can eat your portion too.”

Jin said, and quickly moved Elsa’s portion to his own plate, then ate it all up in three mouthfuls.

“...Thanks.”

Elsa thanked him, looking a bit ashamed.

“Now then, about tomorrow.”

After the meal, while sipping Tee Reinhardt began to talk.

“I asked the people in the inn, and they say that it looks like tomorrow’s weather isn’t going to be very good. And, that the day after tomorrow it’ll clear up. Therefore tomorrow we can both take a break and enjoy ourselves in this village, I think.”

No matter how good the ride comfort was, constantly riding in a carriage wore one out.

“It appears there’s also a mine tunnel for tourists. It seems if luck is with you you can also find gems there. I think going there or the factory where the stones are processed would be good. Apparently you can also buy jewels for cheaper than usual from there.”

“Mm. That’s fine.”

As Elsa also consented, it was decided that tomorrow they would see the sights of this village.

“So, they said the weather will be better the day after tomorrow and we want to go see the ruins, but should go by carriage or on horseback? Apparently the road is rather steep. It seems it would take some time with a normal carriage.”

It must be remembered that was only for ‘normal’ carriages, and so,

“In that case, should we go with my carriage?”

Jin suggested. Neither Reinhardt nor Elsa had any objections.

It was decided that Jin, Reinhardt, Elsa, Reiko, and butler Claude would go.

They considered that depending on the situation they could stay overnight in Keune Village.

Luckily Mine hadn't been fussy about things lately, so there wouldn't be objections from her either.

"Alright, let's sightsee the village tomorrow then."

That was the decision they came to.



Yada Village was a town built on tourism and the mine. The mountain where the mine was was gigantic and out of granite. The granite was rock that had been formed by deep underground magma solidifying. During the solidifying process various minerals segregated and crystallized.

It was called pegmatite (giant crystallized granite), and because of the gases mixed in it had 'cavities' called geodes.

Because geodes contain many kinds of crystallized minerals, pegmatite deposits near the surface make for good mining locations.

Back to the topic at hand, Jin's group went out to see the mine.

Generally, the tunnels open for tourists were old ones from where all the profit had been squeezed out of.

However, it was still possible to discover raw gemstone if you were lucky, and on top of that walking down a long tunnel stretching underground was an experience you could seldom have.

Consequently, it had become good amusement for rich people and nobles.

On the entrance of the tunnel used for sightseeing.

In addition to Jin's group, a noble-ish family –as expected– had also come to sightsee.

There were four people: a middle-aged woman who seemed like the mother, a boy who looked younger than Elsa, a girl who must've been his little sister, and an aging man who appeared to be a butler.

"My my, today it looks like we have the privilege of coming along with you. Nice to meet you. We're the group of the wife of Viscount Secatt who is the assistant of the feudal lord of Desir."

"Thank you for your courteous greetings. We're the group of Shouro Empire's diplomat Reinhardt-sama."

The butler exchanged greetings with his fellow butler Claude.

Two people guided the two groups of four tourists. One of them was a muscular and gigantic young man, who had been carrying luggage for a while now. The other was a middle-aged small man who seemed to be the actual guide.

"Dear visitors, lemme be your guide for today. Please watch where you're walking."

The middle-aged man had a strange style of speaking, or more accurately used some brusque words, and he entered the tunnel in front of the groups to start the tour.

The inside was slightly chilly and damp. At their feet were protruding scraggy rocks, walking was difficult.

On such a path the guide casually walked on. While occasionally looking behind him to confirm that eight people were still following.

The large man was at the back of the line. His task probably was to ensure there were no people falling behind or getting out of sight.

A short distance in from the entrance Magi Tools producing light had been put up here and there on the walls. Because of that they could somehow see where they were going.

"On the off chance you get lost, you can follow these lights back out, huh."

Looking closely, next to the light arrows pointing towards the entrance had been

drawn. If there were such arrows written on every one of them, even if you got lost you could at least find your way out.

Thinking about things like that, Jin was walking in the middle of the line of eight people.

CHAPTER 8

THE MINE

The tunnel had narrow spots too, but generally it was wide enough to easily walk in. Perhaps this place had been redeveloped for the sake its tourism use.

At first the tunnel was level, but gradually it sloped down. Everyone was grateful for the lights that had been installed here and there.

“Mother, aren’t you cold?”

The boy asked his mother. Inside the tunnel temperature was around 15 degrees Celsius, and if you wore a long-sleeved shirt you wouldn’t get cold. However, the madam wore only short-sleeved spring clothing.

“Yes, it’s a little cold here.”

She answered as a matter of course.

“In that case, have this.”

The butler took a half coat from the luggage the large man had been made to carry and presented it to the madam.

“Oh my, thank you.”

The madam said and put on the half coat.

Elsa, who was watching the exchange felt somehow regretful thinking about the long-sleeved coat she was herself wearing.

She then stared at the back of Jin who was walking in front of her. Jin was wearing his coat that he had given for Elsa to wear several times.

Going down a short ladder, then again walking downhill, they arrived at a slightly more spacious place.

“We’ve arrived, here’s the last stop.”

It was an unexpected and a too quick end for the tunnel. Well, there was no way in the first place that they’d be taken to depths deep enough to be dangerous to ordinary people, so it had to be like this for tourism use.

“There are a few branching tunnels, if you’re lucky you can mine ore containing gemstone.”

The guide said. The tool he had was a Magi Tool resembling a chisel.

“Pushing the tip of this thing against rock and pouring in Magic Energy, it digs into the rock it’s pushed against.”

Maybe it could be called a mini rock drill that utilized Magic Energy.

“Mother, I want to try it for a bit.”

The little sister suggested that. It may be that she desired the gems the guide had spoken about.

“You do? Then, just a little bit okay?”

The madam said and the guide took one Magi Device from the large man’s burden.

“Ah, then me too.”

The boy also said, and the guide took out one more. It didn’t look like it came at an extra cost, so three people from Jin’s group, meaning Jin, Reinhardt, and Elsa also decided to give it a try.

Each one entered a separate branching tunnel.

All of which were short, in addition to having several dug-out spots left from previous tourists.

“I wonder if you really can find gemstone here? [Ground Search].”

He used the [Ground Search] magic for the first time in a while.

“...Hm? Eh? What’s this?”

In several places in the walls and the ground there was 'buried' raw ore containing gemstone.

At a guess, they were planted there for the tourists' amusement, or maybe they could be called free gifts. Jin had also heard that the matsutake mountains with paid admission also do a similar thing.

"There's no ore vein here any longer, huh."

A magus who could use [Ground Search] could immediately tell. Well, because much deeper there were places with large ore veins, you couldn't call this mine a fake one.

"Oh well, since it's a tourist attraction, let's enjoy it."

After such a monologue, Jin put the Magi Tool against the area where the ore was buried.



When Jin had dug out several pieces of ore.

"Aww~, I can't find any."

A voice could be heard. Turning around, Jin found the daughter of the viscount family from earlier.

The girl noticed Jin and,

"Ah, so, there was someone here already. My apologies."

She said and began to go back. Jin called her to stop.

"Miss, it seems that you can find comparatively a lot of ore over here. Go ahead if you'd like."

Then the girl stopped, and timidly turned around. In the light of the dim magical lamps Jin could see that she was a cute girl around eight or nine years of age, with blond hair and blue eyes, much resembling her mother.

"Umm, are you sure?"

When she asked that, Jin smiled and nodded, then showed the pieces of ore he had

dug out.

“Woow, there’s a lot. Is it really okay if I dig here too?”

“Yes, go ahead. Around here looks good.”

Jin pointed near the place where he had found ore using [Ground Search].

“Okay, I’ll give it a try.”

The girl said and pushed the excavating Magi Tool she had in her hand on the tunnel wall. Then she poured in Magic Energy.

The Magi Tool vibrated finely, and the tip section that had been coated with Adamantite broke through the rock. Then, a piece of ore broke out and fell.

“Ah, something came out. Mister, this, what is it?”

The girl picked up the ore she had mined out and held it out in front of Jin. Jin took a glance at it and,

“That’s Amethyst.”

He taught her what it was. Then the girl made an expression that was sort of half happy and half disappointed,

“I’ll look harder.”

She said and was once again about to press the Magi Tool on the wall. Then Jin said,

“Instead of digging just there, why don’t you give a try over here too?”

And he pointed at another location where ore had been buried.

“That’s right, isn’t it, I’ll try there.”

The girl obediently went to dig at the wall Jin pointed at. Then once again a piece of ore tumbled out.

“Ah, I found another one. Mister, you’re amazing!”

This time Citrine had come out.

“Aww~, this isn’t the one I wanted either.”

The girl said. Then, Jin tried asking,

“Well, what kind of ore do you want?”

The girl then replied,

“A pink gem!”

There are few pink gemstones. Pink sapphires, tourmalines, and kunzites to name a few. Even topazes were exceedingly rare finds with a high value, so there was no way you could find such a thing in a faked mine for tourists like this.

“Hmm, it would be a nice find, wouldn’t it.”

Jin said while thinking.

A pink sapphire he could somehow manage.

In the first place, sapphires were of an aluminum oxide’s crystal form called corundum. It was a mineral that this place didn’t lack. However, here its purity was just not enough to form a gem.

And so Jin decided to stealthily find a lump of corundum using [Ground Search]. Luckily, he found one in a shallow spot.

Since it was a little far away it was difficult, but he somehow managed to extract the impurities little by little with the [Extraction] magic. Of course, leaving behind the main ingredient aluminum dioxide. And also chromium.

As by nature the rock contained just a bit of chromium, somehow he was able to finish the processing.

“Aww~, I can’t find it~.”

The girl complained. Jin once more called out to her and,

“It looks like there’s something here.”

He told her.

“Mister’s predictions have been on the mark. I’ll try there.”

She said and pushed the Magi Tool there. It was a bit deep so it took some time.

“Nothing seems to come out.”

“It seems that it’s just a bit deeper.”

It looked like the ore was deeper than he had thought. After spending three times longer than in the previous attempts, finally the gem tumbled out.

“I did it! It’s a pink gem!”

The girl happily picked up the gem and held it close to her chest, then quickly bowed.

“Thank you mister. You can have the other gems.”

She said, and went back through the tunnel carrying only the pink sapphire she had discovered.

Jin also thought this was enough, picked up the gems the girl had left behind, and leisurely walked the tunnel back.

CHAPTER 9

THE ORES

Jin returned back to the crossroads of the tunnel branches, just when the other people had all returned too.

“Hey, how did it go for you, Jin? I got these.”

Reinhardt showed the pieces of ore he had harvested. There were two crystals and an amethyst.

“I found these.”

Jin also showed off his spoils.

“Oh, three citrines, three amethysts, and a smoky quartz, huh. As I’d expect from you.”

It seemed that Reinhardt had an idea as to just how Jin found them. Although the little girl dug up one of the citrinse and amethysts each.

“I couldn’t find anything but this one.”

Elsa held out the black quartz in her hand to show it.

“It’s just a crystal, isn’t it.”

Reinhardt voiced his thoughts.

“Mother, here, it’s a present.”

The girl from earlier gave the gem she had dug out earlier as a present to her mother , the wife of Viscount Secatt.

“Now now, really? Schiede, thank you.”

Apparently the girl was called Schiede. She was smiling as her mother stroked her head.

Jin gave them a sidelong glance and thought it was good that he had made the pink sapphire with Craft Magic.

“That mister over there told me where to look.”

Jin heard her say. Then the viscount’s wife walked over where to Jin was and,

“My daughter seems to have had help from you, thank you.”

She thanked Jin.

“Err, excuse me, but you’re Mariria-san, right?”

Reinhardt asked from the side.

“Yes, I am Mariria, and you are?”

“I’m from Shouro Empire, and my name is Reinhardt. I met your husband Viscount Secatt in Asunto the other day.”

He said. After Mariria heard that she said,

“Oh, so that’s how it was. Was my husband okay? He’s been late in coming back so I’ve been worried.”

“Yes, he’s fine. It’s just that there was a bit of trouble during His Highness Ernest’s birthday party, so I think he was recruited for dealing with the aftermath.”

As the propagation of information was slow in this world, it seemed that news of the golem riot hadn’t reached the madam yet. And so Reinhardt told her just the harmless parts.

The madam seemed to be relieved after hearing of her husband’s circumstances from Reinhardt who had been there.

“Brother’s return is late.”

During that, the voice of the little girl, Schiede, could be heard. The young boy who was her elder brother hadn’t come back yet.

“That’s so, Edem’s late, isn’t he.”

“I’ll go search.”

Schiede said and began to run.

“Ah, don’t run, it’s dangerous!”

Right after her mother Mariria said that, Schiede tripped and fell over.

“T-that hurt.”

“Come on, I told you so, ...How inconvenient that I can’t use healing magic...”

Then Elsa stepped forward and,

“Let me. ...[Heal].”

“Ah, it doesn’t hurt any more.”

“My my, young lady, thank you. Come on Schiede, thank her.”

“Okay. Thank you very much, miss.”

Obediently, the girl thanked Elsa as soon as her mother told her to.

“...Take care now.”

“I will.”

It was dark so you couldn’t see it well, but Elsa seemed to blush a little.

“Mother! I found an amazing gem!”

Then, while yelling loudly, Schiede’s elder brother Edem arrived.

“Come on, look! It’s a green gem! And this beautiful shape!”

Edem said while holding out the raw ore he had in his hand towards his mother. Jin at a glance recognized the gem from its unmistakable characteristics.

“Isn’t that fluorite.”

Elsa caught his absent-minded muttering.

“Fluorite?”

“Mm, yeah. It’s the gem that, um, Edem is holding. It’s a neat octahedron, right? Fluorite has that kind of cleavage.”

Fluorite is calcium fluoride. In fact, it is also used in iron manufacture. At the very least, the electric furnace that Jin fell into utilized it in its blast furnace to draw out the foreign matter called slag while manufacturing iron.

And that’s why contrary to expectations it was a mineral Jin was familiar with.

Because it was too soft for a gem (4 on Moh’s hardness scale), no one but some collectors gathered them.

This was probably also one of the freebies for tourists.

“My my, Edem also found a splendid gem. I’m glad.”

“Brother, I found a pink gem.”

“Is that so, good for you.”

“It is.”

Jin had no intention of throwing cold water on the delighted family. However. Their intimacy was just a bit enviable, he thought.

“Alright everyone, did you have fun? It’s about time for us to get out, so please follow me.”

The guide then raised his voice. The eight people returned the borrowed Magi Tools and returned the way they came.



When they came out, the clouds had split and bits of blue sky peeked out from between them. The blowing winds were already the winds of spring.

“Ahh, the outside air is good, isn’t it.”

Jin said while stretching, Reinhardt also agreed with an ‘indeed’, and Elsa too nodded rapidly.

“Well then, farewell everyone.”

The wife of Viscount Secatt said her goodbyes. While waving her hand Schiede said,

“Mister, miss, bye bye!”

Jin and Elsa waved their hands a bit in return.

It was precisely lunchtime so they decided to try going into a nearby restaurant.

Because this was a mining village, the restaurant’s insides too were decorated with various large and small crystals, gems, and pieces of ore.

“There’s no Aquamarine?”

Elsa asked Jin with a low voice.

“Aquamarine, huh. I wonder.”

Aquamarine resembled the color of Elsa’s eyes well. That was one of the reasons it was Elsa’s favorite gem.

“Ah, that seems to be the case.”

There was a fist-sized crystal decoration. Aquamarines were the same mineral as emeralds, but emeralds were crystals born deep underground in enormous pressure, while aquamarines could be found inside regular pegmatite.

“That’s, pretty.”

“It’s pretty even without polishing, huh.”

“Mh-hm, I’d say that if a polished gem was a dressed-up beautiful woman, a raw gem would be a pristine village girl.”

“? ? ?”

“ ... ”

Reinhardt suddenly cut into the conversation. Both Jin and Elsa couldn’t help making an undscribable face as Reinhardt said something uncharacteristically pretentious.

“Huh? I’ve got a feeling that you’re thinking of something awful.”

Reinhardt guessed and said while smiling bitterly, then,

“It’s not just your imagination. A line like that doesn’t suit Rai-nii.”

Elsa revealed her honest impression.

“That’s terrible. I was just considering whether or not to buy that gem, but should I not?”

Reinhardt said as if disgruntled and,

“Sorry. Rai-nii is handsome.”

Elsa said and edged closer to him. Reinhardt’s bitter smile intensified,

“Just when I think you’ve become more of an adult, but you never change, huh. Oh well, I’ll buy it.”

Reinhardt was weak towards his cousin.



“So sapphires like that still come out...?”

The guide who had watched Schiede hand it over to her mother, the Viscount Secatt’s wife, reported it to the miners’ guild.

After that, the tunnel for tourists was closed for two weeks, and mining was cirred out, but far from pink sapphires even regular corundum was barely found.

CHAPTER 10

THE MYSTERY OF ETHER

After finishing lunch, it was decided that each one would spend the afternoon as they pleased.

For some reason Jin headed towards the direction of the mine, but when he was in a place with no other people in it Reiko undid her [Stealth] and appeared. Then,

“Father, it seems something has happened on Hourai Island.”

She informed Jin of it.

“By that, do you mean something even Laozi couldn’t deal with?”

“No, if I had to say then I’d describe it as an important discovery that I wanted to report.”

“Is that so. Alright, let’s go see it for a while.”

Jin said and also used [Stealth, and along with Reiko the two invisible people returned back to the carriage. Jin couldn’t see to the outside so he walked led by the hand by Reiko.

After confirming there was no one watching, they silently boarded the carriage, activated the hidden Warp Gate, and warped to Hourai Island.



“Welcome home, My Lord.”

They came out of the Warp Gate on Hourai Island, and Laozi’s voice greeted them.

“Oh, I’m home. You had something to report?”

Jin proceeded to the chamber where Laozi’s machinery was and sat down on a chair prepared there. Reiko also sat down next to him.

“Yes, My Lord. To be frank, it’s about the ‘Albatross’ units.”

Albatrosses were the airplanes Jin had build that flew with [Magi Jet Engine]s.

“Right now they’re continuing drawing up the topographic map by means of aerial surveillance, but during that process we came to understand something unexpected.”

“Something unexpected?”

“Yes. First, please take a look at this.”

Following Laozi’s instructions, Jin had the in-progress map spread out in front of him. The one responsible for it was the army golem Land-1.

“It’s well made.”

“Thank you. We’ll add the details later, but the terrain can be roughly understood as it is now, I think.”

“Yeah. However, why is there not much of anything in the southern hemisphere?”

The northern hemisphere of the map was drawn detailedly, but only a little had been drawn in the southern hemisphere.

“That’s the point of this report.”

Laozi then began the report.

“At the beginning, measurements advanced all right. However, the ‘Albatrosses’ that went south noticed an abnormality. As did the boarded Sky golems.”

“An abnormality?”

“Yes. The operation efficiency of the Ether Converters fell. However, when we examined the returned Albatrosses we didn’t find anything unusual.”

When Jin heard that, a hypothesis came to his mind, but because of the lack of information he refrained from a snap judgment, and had Laozi continue.

“And then, for the Albatrosses that went north, they say that conversely their Ether Converters’ performances increased. Again the boarded Sky golems reported this same increase.”

After that Jin had the feeling that his hypothesis wasn’t incorrect.

Laozi concluded with stating that from this information he deemed that the concentration of Ether in the air increases when going north, and decreases when going south. It was consistent with Jin's hypothesis.

"Father."

At that time Reiko, who had been silent until now, spoke.

"During Mother's era, it appears that the habitats were divided so that north was devil beasts' territory, and south was humans' territory. Don't you think there's a connection?"

When Laozi heard that,

"Reiko-san, thank you for the excellent information. My Lord, judging from this information there can be no doubt of the fact that Ether concentration becomes denser when heading north."

He reasoned. Jin agreed too. Reiko also agreed and explained,

"Besides, during the time I searched for Father, I warped all around, and there was an area where the efficacy of my Ether Converter was strangely higher. Perhaps it may have been in the north."

Jin nodded and spoke of his conclusion.

"Yeah, with that many facts, putting aside the reason for it, your conclusion doesn't seem to be mistaken. When it comes to going north, there's no problems, but there's an urgent need for development for the planes going south."

With that, Jin started designing a new type of aircraft with Laozi's assistance.

"Let's install three Ether Converters. Then to have it be able to fly even without Ether, also build in a large Mana Tank."

The Ether Converters and the Mana Tank differed from the usual mechanical airplanes, but the size didn't change that much, so while making additions they didn't end up making a larger fuselage.

"My Lord, I recommend also supplementing the Magi Jet Engines."

Laozi thought they'd better augment the engines, so he made a suggestion. Jin decided to adopt that suggestion and,

"Alright, let's add one to both wings. By having three engines in total surely even long-range flights would be possible."

There was no way that the number of engines would be proportional to the flight range, but the point was probably valid as it made it easier to increase both flight speed and altitude. It didn't mean that Jin comprehended much of the aerodynamics from the start. He only had had experience building model planes. If it didn't work out, he'd just rebuild them, Jin thought.

And thus, they decided to build several fuselages.

First was the fuselage for use in long-distance reconnaissance. It was loaded with three Ether Converters and three Magi Jet Engines too. It had a large Mana Tank and – theoretically– it could easily go around the world.

Next was the fuselage for use in transportation. It was similar to the long-distance reconnaissance models, but rather than improving flight distance the takeoff weight was improved by increasing the surface of the wings and the volume of the fuselage.

Finally was the fuselage for use in stealth manoeuvres. The 'Albatross' was used as the base, but a [Stealth] function was installed, the offensive ability strengthened, and the frame was made to be capable of high-speed movement. It would be no exaggeration to call it a stealth fighter.

They were each named with the long-range reconnaissance model being 'Skylark', the transportation-model being 'Pelican', and the secret model being 'Raptor'.

The Skylark was a Eurasian skylark, and Raptor was a bird of prey. Jin christened them after names he had heard while on Earth. If you thought of the two then certainly, you'd get the feeling that albatross would be a better name for the long-distance reconnaissance plane rather than skylark, but since Jin named them it's hopeless to worry.



When the designs were roughly completed, Jin once more viewed the map.

From the measurements until now, he could grasp the approximate size of this planet.

“However, it’s smaller than I thought.”

According to Laozi’s calculations this planet’s diameter was approximately 2400 kilometers. It was small compared to Earth’s diameter of about 12700 kilometers.

“It’s filled with heavy elements after all...Probably magical elements too, huh.”

Jin had an interest in this planet’s structure too, but he postponed that and changed to a different thought.

“Laozi, it seems that there’s a turbulent situation in this world too, so stay alert.”

Jin brought it to Laozi’s attention.

“Yes, things such as [Subordination Rewriting Magic] and Unifilers, right? I get the reports from Reiko-san too.”

“Yeah, that’s right. If they knew about this place, they’d unmistakably set their aims here. Be careful.”

“Understood, My Lord. I will do that, and staying vigilant in Kaina Village is important too, right?”

“Right.”

It was the name of the village that was special to Jin. You could call the village a second home to him.

Now that Jin had received the title of honorary Magi Craftsman of Egelia Kingdom, a small hope swelled of perhaps being able to go to Cline Kingdom and openly visit Kaina Village located in its countryside. It still seemed to for a bit later in the future, though.

After that, Jin spent time listening to the detailed reports regarding the islands’ development, and the state of affairs on Kunlun Island.

To put it briefly, everything was going very well.

Finally, he tried asking about mining Elradrite, but unfortunately a vein of it couldn’t

be found on either Hourai Island or Kunlun Island.

“Well, I guess it can’t be helped. Please continue your investigations.”

“Yes, My Lord.”

Then Jin once again went through the Warp Gate and returned to Yada Village.



Because of the time difference, it was still bright in Yada Village.

After getting out of the carriage, Jin took the opportunity to check and see if there’s been any damage or abnormalities anywhere.

“Ah, Jin-kun.”

A voice then greeted him. Turning around, he saw Elsa.

“What, are you up to?”

“Um, just inspecting the carriage. Tomorrow, we’ll take this to the ruins, right? That’s why.”

Elsa looked satisfied with an answer like that.

“Jin-kun’s remarkable. Even after making something like this, you’re still prudent.

“Haha, you won’t get anywhere even with flattery.”

Jin replied like that to Elsa’s praise and,

“Alright, everything’s normal.”

He said and clapped his hands together.

“I hope the weather’s fine tomorrow.”

“Mm.”

Jin looked up at the sky while walking alongside Elsa.

The clouds in the sky dyed red by the sunset seemed to be an omen of fine weather for tomorrow.

CHAPTER 11

SIDE STORY 6:

THE MELANCHOLY OF KING EGELIA

The king of Egelia Kingdom, Harold Ruan Autocracy=Egelia was melancholic.

“King, what shall we do now?”

The Minister of Financial Affairs, Baloroot, asked while casting his tired eyes on some documents he had in his hands.

“The national budget of about three years disappeared, huh.”

Finally the settlement of affairs after the incident of the golem party from some days ago was over.

The restoration of the broken castle, replacement of the destroyed golems (mostly by Reiko), the countermeasures for the new golems, the consolation money for domestic and foreign guests... No matter how much gold you had it wasn't enough for the situation.

And on top of that,

“Father, good morning.”

“Your Highness, good morning.”

The business with the third prince Ernest. Today too he was accompanied by his favorite maid golem, Lotte.

The third prince of Egelia Kingdom, Ernest, was not the child of King Egelia's princess consort, but one born of a mistress. Therefore his right of succession to the throne was after the uncle who was the King's younger brother.

However, the prince in question absolutely did not care about it, and grew up wild and uncontrolled. As a father, seeing that was sweet, but as a king that was honestly

speaking a headache.

“Mmh, morning. Ernest, do you have any plans for today?”

“Yes, Father. Studies of science and good manners in the morning, and practice of horseriding and fencing in the afternoon.”

“Is that so, keep it up.”

“Yes.”

The busy king exchanged few short words with his beloved son, and then went back to his official duties.

“There was also Lotte and the business with that carriage, wasn’t there.”

The king once again remembered the cause of his headache.

They had begun compensating for the labor shortage by means of golems 12 years ago. After Prince Ernest was born, in practically no time all of his retainers except for his wet nurse had been replaced with golems.

It was the most important necessity that the people who took care of the members of royal family could be trusted. People like that were few, so the other princes, the king, and the queen took precedence.

You could say that it was just inevitable that Prince Ernest who was fourth in line for the throne was put on the back burner.

As a consequence, Prince Ernest turned out to be fond of golems.

“But he’s still the best-qualified of them all.”

The first prince was too soft-hearted and couldn’t be depended on, the second prince was quick to fight, and not suitable for politics. His younger brother would make for a decent king, he thought, but as a parent the current king wanted to have one of his own children who shared his blood to inherit the throne, that was simply human nature.

Prince Ernest’s intelligence and personality both were good. He was also liked by the

knights and soldiers around him.

Currently, because of his lineage and age he could only be bestowed the right of succession, not chosen as the crown prince. When Prince Ernest turned 15, the King was planning to ascertain the talents of all of his children and then name the crown prince.

“...If he just wasn’t too attached to that golem.”

A king’s foremost responsibility was the preservation of the family line. The thing most to be avoided was internal squabbles over succession. Although Prince Ernest was of the king’s own seed, right now he was worried about the prince’s future.

“I’ve heard that there is a woman who was the model for Lotte, but even though she’s a commoner, she’s the fiancée of Earl Kuzuma.”

As the prince was 13 years old, there was no end to guessing how serious he was, but the King had heard Prince Ernest had suddenly proposed to the girl called Beana.

“Should I just be relieved that he doesn’t seem to lack an interest in human women?”

King Egelia who had thought it through that far shook his head and returned his focus back to the official documents in front of him.



“Ahh, I’m tired.”

“Good work, Your Highness.”

After his private tutor’s lessons Prince Ernest was relaxing and drinking the Tee Lotte had brewed for him.

“There’s still the etiquette teacher who will come after this.”

“That’s right. Please study diligently.”

“Yeah, thanks.”



“What? You can’t?”

“Yes, my apologies.”

The breath of Minister of Magic Kelhidore was taken away after he heard the report of his subordinates.

It informed him of the fact that they were unable to copy the horse golems Jin had built for the carriage he had gifted to Prince Ernest.

“Even though the golems in question are right in front of you?”

“Yes.”

The golem horses Jin had built and left behind. Their size and shape were exactly that of normal horses. That much was just moderately good. The number one wonder was their movements.

Four-legged walking wasn’t something like just moving the left and right legs alternatively and it working out fine. On modern Earth using high-speed cameras their movements could be analyzed, but in this world magi neither knights nor Magi Craftsmen could accomplish it.

Incidentally, the [Transfer Info] magic that Jin used often was rather popular before the Great Magic War. Using it the information of the movements could be extracted from real horses, but that magic had been long since lost.

And because of that preconception even Minister of Magic Kelhidore did not realize it in spite of receiving a report from the Royal Secret Maid Rianna herself whom Jin had used exactly that magic on. It was a frightening notion. Although, even Rianna whom the magic had been used on had somewhat muddled the contents of the report so the magic’s true nature wouldn’t be revealed.

“Hmm, I guess we can’t make anything more than a lookalike.”

The King who had seen the horse golems Prince Ernest had had Jin build for himself had given the order to make similar golems to use in the royal carriages.

For the next few days, not only King Egelia but the Minister of Magic Kelhidore too continued being greatly perplexed.



“Which reminds me, wasn’t there a Royal Secret Maid who followed Jin?”

While on a break in the middle of his business, the King suddenly remembered it and asked the Minister of Defense Judol who was next to him.

“Yes, you mean Laila Soluz?”

“Ah, so she was called that. If I’m not mistaken, isn’t she the little sister of Airi Soluz from the Imperial Guard’s magi knights team?”

“Yes. Both of the sisters have a great deal of latent Magic Energy. The little sister doesn’t seem to have manifested it yet though.”

Judol explained. But the King waved his hand to interrupt,

“Oh, that’s not what I mean. Would it be possible to have her follow Ernest?”

“Yes, currently she’s not attending as a Royal Secret Maid, um, how should I put it, because Laila doesn’t seem to be cut out for the job.”

“Mh-hm, mh-hm, in that case there shouldn’t be any problems. Alright, at once have that, Laila Soluz did you say, appointed as Ernest’s maid. But have her look like a guard to the outside.”

“Okay, understood.”

As he turned 13 his guards were added to. With that as the official cause, Laila was decided to become Prince Ernest’s maid.

“Did you hear, Laila! Congratulations!”

“Isn’t that a huge promotion!”

Even her fellow Royal Secret Maids were congratulating her.

“Maybe if you’re fitting for the Prince couldn’t you even aim to become his mistress!”

Said the Royal Secret Maid who followed Beana, Lisa.

“I wonder if someone like me is fit for the duty...”

Laila herself was anxious rather than delighted, and bewilderment took precedence over joy.

The squad leader Rianna gently encouraged the doubting Laila.

“It’ll be fine. I’ve heard that the Prince is kind, and in addition, doesn’t this seem like a direct order from the King?”

But that only made her wither even more.

“Eeehhh...From the King, why me?”

“Uh, I don’t know about that.”

“Eeeeehhhh...”

While filled with anxiety, Laila headed towards Prince Ernest’s room.

She knocked, and entered the room. There was Lotte waiting upon Prince Ernest..

The Prince noticed Laila and greeted her while smiling,

“Yo, Laila. It’s been a while. Your complexion doesn’t look so good, are you okay?”

Laila was astonished that the Prince remember her and,

“Y-your Highness, how come you happen to remember lowly me?”

She asked with a sensation of being little flustered. As a matter of fact, this was a major lese-majeste. Because she spoke to the Prince without even a greeting.

But the Prince didn’t show to mind it in the slightest and,

“Haha, aren’t you the one who brought clothes to this here Lotte. Since then, right? That’s why I said it’s been a while.”

He said, and Laila finally remembered that someone in her status shouldn’t go without greeting him and,

“E-excuse me! My name is Laila Soluz and I am here today because I’ve been appointed to be Your Highness Ernest’s maid! I may be lacking but I’ll do my best in my efforts to

serve you, that being the case it is a pleasure to meet yow-”

Laila frantically spoke out, but maybe because she wasn’t used to talking like this, at the very end she bit her tongue.



“Ahahahaha!”

Looking at her, Prince Ernest laughed merrily.

“Laila, you don’t have to be so tense. My father told me that I should have you as someone to talk to or consult with without thinking too hard about it. Let’s get along from now on.”

“Y-yees!”

Laila hastily bowed. Simultaneously a dull thump could be heard.

“Oww...”

Because she had forgotten about the table in front of her and due to the depth of her bow, she ended up hitting her forehead into it with force.

“La-laila, are you okay? That was a somewhat terrific sound.”

“Hyeah, I’b fime.”

Laila’s life in her new workplace was just beginning.

CHAPTER 12

TO THE ANCIENT RUINS

The day Jin's group would head to Keine Village, the weather had been clear since morning.

As planned, they departed towards Keine Village with Jin's carriage. The lineup was Jin, Reinhardt, Elsa, and the butler Claude.

Reiko sat in the coachman's seat.

Just like it had been said, the road was rather poor. It was of course uneven, there were abrupt slopes, places where it got narrower and large rocks were strewn about.

In spite of such a bad road, Jin's carriage kept going and they arrived in Keine Village before noon.

"We're early, eh? Just as expected from Jin's carriage!"

Reinhardt commended the carriage again.

"Alright, now where could the so-called ancient ruins be?"

After parking the carriage in a suitable open space Jin observed the surroundings. This Keine Village had the atmosphere of a deserted mountain village. It was much more declined compared to Kaina Village.

"Are there really something like ruins here?"

If there was such cultural heritage-like thing here wouldn't it be better for this place to be a little more populous, Jin thought.

"Hey you, you came here to see the ruins, right?"

Jin turned to face the voice, and there stood an old person with a crooked back leaning on a cane. They seemed to be from this village.

“Uh, yeah. The ruins of...Keuwan, was it? Certainly we thought we’d want to have a look.”

Jin explained their reason for coming here and,

“Oh-hoh, I thought so. The ruins, eh. Ya got some strange tastes.”

The elder said with a slight accent and laughed,

“In that case, over here. I got spare time anyways, so I guess I’ll be yer guide.”

They then began to walk towards the mountain.

Jin’s group exchanged glances.

“What do you want to do?”

“Well, how about we try going along?”

“Mm. I think that’s fine.”

“There doesn’t seem to be any danger. I couldn’t feel any bloodlust or ill will from that person.”

Apparently the butler Claude was a top-class swordsman in the past, and he judged the elder to not be a danger.

“Alright, in that case shall we go? Oh yeah, Jin, will the carriage be fine?”

Reinhardt asked worriedly, but Jin just smiled and said it’ll be fine.

“I locked it, so.”

Far from just a lock, secretly the SP were standing guard so Jin could leave behind the carriage without a worry, but Jin couldn’t say that.

“Oi, what’s wrong?”

The elder at the end of the road turned around and yelled. Jin quickly took out the luggage and,

“Okay, let’s go.”

He began to walk. Reinhardt and the others also started walking. Elsa noticed that Jin curiously had luggage this time so,

“Jin-kun, that, what is it?”

She was interested and asked. Jin replied with a smile.

“This? Various necessities.”

He said and began to explain.

“Light, water, food, and rope are packed in there.”

After that clarification, Claude raised his voice in approval,

“Oh my, Jin-sama has thoroughly prepared, haven’t you. Unlike yesterday’s sightseeing in the mines, ruins receive practically no maintenance, you see. Illumination and water are necessary for sure.”

He said and pointed at his own luggage. Apparently Claude also made his own preparations.

This time for the first time in a while, Reiko was walking by Jin with ‘Peach Blossom’ in hand, as if to prevent being separated.

“You guys, you brought a lot of stuff but there’s no need for something like that.”

The elder who went in front of them absent-mindedly said.

“Eh?”

“The ruins aren’t that large, you see. We’ll just take a quick peek inside, and it’ll be over after that.”

“Is that right?”

Jin asked and the elder nodded.

“Yesh. If it were a little more noteworthy there would be a lot more people, see.”

Apparently it would be quite a let-down. But, as they had already troubled themselves they kept carrying the luggage they had.

After ten minutes of walking, they arrived at the face of a huge cliff.

“A cliff...?”

“It seems to be at least a hundred meters tall.”

“The entrance is over there, check it out.”

The elder pointed at the nearby vertical cliff that was all granite, and at its base was the entrance to the ancient ruins.

“There’s no dangers or anything. Sometimes during hot summers we locals go in to cool off.”

The elder’s explanation somewhat dampened their interest, but as the group had come for expressly this, they moved towards the entrance.

“It seems to be somewhat disappointing.”

Reinhardt said but,

“Even so this is my first time in a place like this. Maybe it’ll be unexpectedly interesting once we enter.”

Elsa said. Jin kept walking in silence. Then, Reiko suddenly stopped and grasped Jin’s hand.

“Father, there is someone in the ruins.”

Just like she said, from the entrance of the ruins a single person came out.

“Oh, how curious. Visitors, eh?”

“Oh, teacher, investigating the ruins today too I see.”

This person seemed to be an acquaintance of the elder as they called him teacher. He too was old enough to be called an elder. No hair was found on top of his head, and instead on his chin was a magnificent white beard.

But his back was upright, and from his grey eyes one got an impression of overflowing vitality. He was wearing a white robe-like coat, indeed giving him the atmosphere of a researcher.

“Mh-hm, if I don’t come here once a day I can’t calm down.”

He said, turned to Jin’s group and,

“Young people having an interest in ancient ruins like this makes me the happiest I can be as a researcher. I am Rucall, the town archeologist.”

“I’m Jin. This is Reiko.”

“I’m Reinhardt. And this is Elsa.”

“My name is Claude and I am their butler.”

As the man named Rucall introduced himself, so did Jin’s group introduce themselves and greet him.

“I’ve investigated these ruins for ten years now, but there’s still a very much left that I do not understand. Even so, would you like me to be your guide for a bit?”

Rucall offered. They were honestly thankful to have a person who’s done research on the ruins as a guide rather than just look around aimlessly.

“That’s right, in that case if you would, please.”

Reinhardt acted upon the group’s interests and said.

“Alright, then come this way.”

Rucall led the group to the entrance of the ruins he had just himself left.

The ruins’ entrance was a crack in the cliff’s granite, giving a really rather weathered and crumbling sensation, but after stepping inside that impression was blown away.

“Wha...What is this?”

It was a wide room with many chairs, benches, and beds. Scattered around were piles of trash.

“Hahaha, you must be surprised. This was originally a wide empty room, but as this place is cool in the summers and warm in the winters, the locals started using this place for summering and wintering. And because of that the condition is like this.”

Rucall explained. Likely for that reason magic lamps were set up here and there, and although it wasn't as bright as during the day, it was still plenty bright.

“Oh, so that's how it was.”

“It was so sudden, so I got surprised.”

After Rucall's explanation Reinhardt and Elsa laughed and said, while only Jin had a frown on his face.

CHAPTER 13

THE SECRET OF THE ANCIENT RUINS

“Jin, what’s wrong?”

Reinhardt who had noticed Jin’s unusual look asked worriedly.

Then, while a single drop of sweat trickled down his forehead,

“This is... a giant Warp Gate.”

He said.

“What!?”

“This, is a Warp Gate?”

Reinhardt and Elsa were surprised, but the most surprised one was Rucall.

“W-w-wha-what! Di-did you call this a Warp Gate? H-how could you tell!?”

His face went red and then blue, but eventually he stammered something out.

“Why you ask...Well, there’s no other answer than because I recognize it.”

Jin who had used Artifacts known as Warp Gates multiple times by now said and dodged the question, but he unmistakably recognized it as a Warp Gate Artifact.

“Uh, mm, I, uh ...It took me ten years of investigation before grasping that and you say you saw it at a single glance!? That’s ridiculous!”

“Uh, well, sorry about that.”

Jin apologized to the agitatedly yelling Rucall without really understanding why.

“Oh yeah, look, over there, you see that portion of a magic formation where that paving stone is upturned? Isn’t that evidence of a Warp Gate?”

Jin tried telling him, but Rucall became more deranged.

“As if I’d know! In the first place, there’s no way something like the magic formation used in a Warp Gate would be circulated!”

It looked like saying anything would be pointless by now, so,

“Jin-kun, let’s go.”

Elsa pulled Jin’s sleeve. Jin also thought that it’d be better to leave him like that for now, and left the spot.

“So, you say this is a Warp Gate... It’s huge, isn’t it.”

Reinhardt said in an impressed voice.

“Yeah. Even I didn’t know a Warp Gate could be this big. Well, it looks to be no longer functional though.”

Jin said. However, it seemed that the air conditioning still worked while faulty. Cool in summers and warm in winters. Caverns are like that, sure, but considering a shallow place like this air conditioning just makes sense once you think about it.

While Jin was thinking about things like that, Reinhardt turned to ask him.

“Hey, Jin, what do you think a Warp Gate as large as this was used for?”

“From its size I would say probably transmitting large quantities of goods or crowds of people.”

Reinhardt nodded and,

“I think so too. Isn’t this most likely one of the fortresses from the Great Magic War?”

He spoke of his conjecture. Jin agreed with him too.

“I see, that possibility is very likely...”



Then, Rucall who had recovered cut into the conversation.

“You people! You really think so! That’s the same conclusion I came to after ten years! There’s no mistaking that this is a region’s fortress from the time of the Great Magic War!”

“Uh...huh.”

The excited Rucall continued chattering.

“The Great Magic War! That was the battle which the devil race and mankind bet their whole existence on! The devil race was strong, and humans were weak! But, humans didn’t perish. Why do you think that was?”

Rucall asked Jin. Jin replied with a guess.

“Was it the Ether Stampede?”

That appeared to be the correct answer.

“That’s right! Ether Stampede, using that, although temporarily, all the Ether in the atmosphere vanished. The devil race couldn’t keep on living without Ether. However, humans, with the exception of powerful maguses, could live even without Ether.”

When Jin heard that he felt a chill down his spine. Supposing another Ether Stampede happened not Jin, Reinhardt, nor Elsa would likely survive. And Reiko too would probably become unable to operate.

“Was the technique for an Ether Stampede handed down?”

Jin then tried throwing a question like that at him.

“Hm? No, no. Including that, most of the techniques from before the Great Magic War weren’t handed down. And for that reason, I am studying these ancient ruins!”

Jin was relieved for now. There didn’t seem to be an immediate danger. However,

(Maybe it’s better to think about countermeasures against an Ether Stampede.)

Jin thought in his heart.

While Jin was like that, Reinhardt asked him another question.

“Hey, Jin, if this is a fortress, do you think there’s something other than a Warp Gate?”

“Hmm, a commander’s office, living quarters, a sickbay, mess hall, and finally...”

Jin spoke out while thinking, and eventually little hesitantly,

“...An armoury.”

He said.

Reinhardt agreed with what Jin said.

“I think so too. Somewhere in these ruins, I thought, shouldn’t there be hidden weapons from the past.

He continued further.

“If they were to fall into the hands of the ‘Unifilers’, I think that...”

After explaining this far, even Jin understood Reinhardt’s worry.

“That’s certain. It’s fine if there’s none, but if there are any we have to do something about them.”

Jin had the same opinion. He then looked over at a wall and,

“If this is the chamber for the Warp Gate, it’s something like an entrance hall. There must be a basement floor just like this aboveground one. In that case, if there’s a storeroom it must be underground on the same floor or deeper, don’t you think?”

Jin said, and once again Rucall spoke out.

“No no. There’s no other floor or anything like that. Even though I may look like this, I can use a little bit of magic, and I investigated at least that much. But it was useless. There are no other rooms other than this one.”

He said. Jin was going to try to object to that, but on second thoughts he held his tongue. Instead, Reinhardt spoke,

“In that case, it’s fine, isn’t it. Well then, if there’s nothing more to see here, let us go.”

Jin and Elsa were of the same mind, and so the group left the still muttering Rucall behind in the ruins and went out.

Outside, the sunlight was dazzling. The elder who had guided them was not there either.

“Now then, what shall we do until the night?”

Reinhardt asked. Hearing the question, Elsa looked puzzled.

“Eh? Aren’t we going back?”

Jin allayed her worries.

“Well, let’s to the carriage at least. You’ll hear the details inside.”

And so the group lazily walked, and returned to Jin’s carriage. It was the early afternoon, and the spring winds felt pleasant.

“Alright, now let’s explain.”

After returning to the carriage, they sat in the cabin and closed the door.

“Reiko, please keep watch so that people don’t come close.”

“Yes, Father.”

Jin made doubly sure with his precautions, and suggested for Reinhardt to begin explaining.

“Alright. Elsa, earlier, you heard about the Unifilers, right?”

“Mm.”

First was the explanation to Elsa.

“The Unifilers scheme to revive Dinar Kingdom. That means those guys surely want lost technology desperately.”

“Mm, I understand.”

Next Jin took over and began to talk.

“If those ancient ruins are the remnants of an old fortress, there’s no way it’s just that

room. I can guarantee that.”

“Then, that means, that.”

“Right. An armory surely exists. And past technologies too.”

Then Reinhardt once more took over and began talking.

“By all rights our course of action ought to be to get in touch with the appropriate agencies of Egelia Kingdom and have them investigate, but looking at the present state and how it’s been left as-is for dozens of years, at the very least the lot in Uremlin are entirely incompetent.”

Uremlin was the closest provincial city. Reinhardt knew fairly well what to say and when.

“In addition, that Rucall fellow is suspicious. Way too suspicious. Why would one room like that take ten years?”

Jin had the same opinion. No matter how you look at it it was suspicious. Reinhardt brought it all to a conclusion.

“I thought that for now, we should take measures so that Unifilers can’t benefit from this.”

Jin agreed with that and,

“Yeah. They’re people who would manipulate Reiko and golems made by others. We don’t know what kind of dirty tricks they have. We must go ahead before them on this one, I think.”

He said. Finally, Reinhardt said,

“Moreover, the so-called ancient technologies are also interesting!”

He brought the explanation to an end. After hearing that Elsa felt her shoulders lose strength.

CHAPTER 14

SNEAKING INTO THE RUINS

After that, they had lunch in the carriage. The butler Claude tactfully went outside to eat, and it made Jin feel a bit guilty, but no matter how Jin tried to persuade him he stubbornly didn't listen and so that's how things were.

The dinner was bread and fruit prepared beforehand. And then at the critical moment Jin took out his thermos flask.

"Ah, hot. Why?"

Elsa was surprised that the Tee inside the thermos flask had retained its warmth. Jin smiled and,

"That's something called a 'thermos flask'."

He explained.

"Does it use magic?"

Elsa tilted her head and asked.

"No, it keeps the contents warm as if it used magic, but it doesn't utilize any particular magic. Although I did add [Clean-up]'s Magi Formula to it, but that doesn't have any connection with the heat insulation."

"Then, why?"

"Yeah, I'm also interested."

As not just Elsa but also Reinhardt was interested, Jin adjusted his sitting posture to begin explaining while drinking the Tee.

"This is also something I learned from my teacher, but there's three ways to transmit heat."

He began like so. Both Reinhardt and Elsa were listening intently.

"First is conduction. It's the transfer of temperature between objects."

“Uh-huh, if I put a metal spoon in hot soup, the handle will soon become hot.”

It seemed that Reinhardt immediately digested it.

“Next is radiation. When you hold a hand out near a fire it gets warmer, right?”

After the question this time Elsa replied.

“Mm. Even from a distance, it’s warm. You say that’s radiation?”

Jin gave a nod to Elsa’s question, and started to speak of the third way.

“The third one is convection. As air or water for example warm up they become lighter and ascend, and as cold air is heavier it comes down. Convection is the repetition of this cycle the air does.”

“I see, so when you heat up a cold room with a fire, and the ceiling is warm while the floor is cold, it’s that.”

Reinhardt said, and Elsa also spoke of her experience.

“A bath. Without stirring it, only the top is hot while the bottom is cold.”

Jin clapped his hands together and,

“That’s right. You two are good, huh.”

He spoke well of them.

“So, this thermos flask, the walls of the container have a hollow structure, and the air inside has been drawn out. Having done that, there’s no way for heat to escape using convection or conduction.”

Jin said, and Reinhardt’s face lit up,

“And so that’s why it doesn’t cool down very much! Amazing, Jin, what’s that discipline called?”

He got somewhat excited.

“It’s ‘science’. It’s the study and attempt of explaining all the phenomena of nature.”

Jin explained, and Elsa gave out a rare smile,

“I see now. One of the reasons Jin-kun is amazing is that he knows this science thing. That’s why all the Magi Tools Jin-kun constructs make sense.”

She said. Jin nodded and,

“Elsa, that’s exactly right. The science I learned from my teacher, they learned from their teacher, who again learned from their teacher, and like that it is the knowledge attained after thousands of years.”

He explained.

“Hmm, I would’ve also liked to be taught by Jin’s teacher!”

Reinhardt said, seeming frustrated. Possibly the reason Reinhardt hadn’t asked prying questions regarding Jin’s teacher was out of consideration for him.



Day turned to night.

The moon that told of was hanging right in the middle of the sky. That meant it was minutes to midnight.

“Now then, shall we go?”

Reinhardt asked in a low voice.

“Yeah.”

Jin agreed.

“...”

Elsa was sleeping on the reclining chair. And so Reinhardt gave orders to the butler Claude.

“Claude, please stay here and watch over Elsa. Me and Jin will go to the ancient ruins.”

“Yes, as you wish.”

Because Reiko followed them as a guard, with Claude there were no worries. Well, and because the SP were guarding the carriage from the shadows.

Although they traveled the road during the day, during the night walking was hard. Even more so as to be safe they were walking without lighting any lamps. Nevertheless, with the guidance of Reiko to whom darkness was irrelevant Jin and Reinhardt could be at ease.

And then at last they arrived at the entrance to the ancient ruins. From inside the light of magic lamps leaked out, likely because the lamps had been left on.

“Reiko, please somehow check that there’s no people inside.”

“Yes.”

According to Jin’s instructions, Reiko disappeared using [Stealth] and approached the entrance of the ancient ruins like wind, peeked inside, and returned without making a sound.

Although there was no way Jin or Reinhardt saw this.

“It’s fine, there is no one.”

The two were relieved by the report and again set foot inside the ancient ruins.

“Now then, Jin, where should we start? You’re probably well-informed so I’ll follow your instructions.”

Reinhardt said. Jin lived in a mansion that had a Warp Gate, even though it was small, and for that reason Reinhardt must’ve referred to Jin’s judgment.

After thinking for a bit Jin replied.

“It must be underground. If it’s an important storehouse, surely you’ll build it underground. And I dare say there’s no doubt it’s hidden using concealment magic.”

Reinhardt agreed with that reply, saying,

“That’s most likely the case. But, concealment magic? That’s troublesome.”

But Jin shook his head in denial.

“That only prevents searching through magical means.”

“Eh?”

“If there’s a cave on the other side of the wall, the sound it makes when you hit it is different, right?”

“Mh-hm.”

“So basically, let’s use [Sonar].”

Jin explained and Reinhardt gave a pat on Jin’s shoulder in praise.

“I see! I didn’t notice that! Let’s try it right now!”

And so Jin and Reinhardt both went to using [Sonar] magic to search the floors and walls.

“Not here...”

When Jin was about to start on the next wall, Reinhardt yelled.

“Jin! Come see this!”

“What’s up, did you find it?”

Jin ran in a hurry to where Reinhardt was.

“Uh-huh. Behind this.”

Then Jin also tried investigating using [Sonar], and indeed he noticed that on the other side of that wall there was a large cave.

“Having done that, next is how to get to the other side.”

They could use earth magic to dig a hole, but thinking about the future leaving traces behind would be kind of bad.

Eventually, they decided to dig a different hole from outside.

They went outside temporarily. Reiko who had been standing guard accompanied them to a place around fifty meters away.

“Alright, let’s dig around here I guess.”

As there was a protrusion of rock making it hard to see it from outside, they chose that place and finally work began.

“[Dig].”

Jin dug the hole,

“[Hardening].”

And Reinhardt strengthened the walls to prevent a collapse.

Reiko went out to throw the resulting debris far away.

Like that, after approximately an hour, finally the hole pierced through.

“We did it!”

A large room spread out beyond the hole.

Jin and Reinhardt carefully stepped inside.

CHAPTER 15

WHAT WAS IN THE ANCIENT RUINS

Jin and Reinhardt were in the middle of the pitch black room into which they had broken into.

“[Light].”

Jin used light magic as illumination. With that their surroundings became visible.

“What could this place be...”

Reinhardt posed a question.

The room was a bit large, and only a few old-style desks and chairs had been left behind. The design of the desks and chairs resembled the design that Jin’s predecessor used.

“Isn’t this either an office or the control room?”

Jin also had only a guess to go on.

“But there might be a room beyond this one. Let’s search.”

And so, with the exception of the wall they had punched a hole through, they went to investigate the three walls, ceiling, and the floor. This time a passage was soon found. There was a door on the furthest wall of the room. Although it had been camouflaged so that you couldn’t tell at a glance.

“Should we try going?”

“Yeah.”

After such a brief exchange, Jin and Reinhardt continued even deeper.

They followed the just unveiled passage for about five meters and there was another door.

“I’ll open it. Jin, you be on your guard.”

Reinhardt said, and as a precaution Jin prepared to fire a spell at any moment.

Then Reinhardt opened the door.

“Uh!?”

Simultaneously with the door opening the room lit up. It seemed that the room’s magic lamps hadn’t stopped working.

“This is...”

What appeared in front of their eyes were empty bookshelves.

“It’s like a storeroom for documents.”

Reinhardt looked over the bookshelves and said his conclusion.

“These were left behind.”

Only two books, made out of parchment-like paper had been simply closed and left behind on the corners of the shelves.

“Is anything written on them?”

Jin decided to try reading. Jin noticed that these books were written in the characters from an ancient era, and he could read even 1000-year-old magical letters.

For the time being, Jin pretended to read them with difficulty, as explaining how he learned to read this would be difficult.

“Fifth... month.... 23rd day... The invasion... of the devil race.... Decision.... made to.... abandon... the fort....”

It was a record like a journal. Surely something from the time of the Great Magic War. That’s how Reinhardt thought.

“Documents...weapons...food...taken...out...as much as...we could carry”

Jin read aloud while Reinhardt nodded, and he analyzed it.

“I see, so there were too many places to guard from the devil race’s invasion, and this fort was abandoned, is that it? And in so doing, they took out everything important.”

“Just...in case...the hall...of...the Warp Gate...was...covered up”

“Oh, so the ones who hid this were from our side. Conversely now we had trouble finding it though.”

Like Reinhardt said, although the Warp Gate was buried, the future descendants of the same side first digging it up was an ironic tale.

Jin closed the record and,

“Well, nothing important has been written down, really.”

He said, but Reinhardt shook his head and,

“No, It’s a document that approaches the truth of the Great Magic War, even if it’s just a bit. Let’s take it and go.”

Reinhardt said. Taking documents like this from a foreign country’s historic ruins was surely practically a criminal act, but they told themselves that it was preferable to having it fall into the hands of the Unifilers.

“There’s also the option of sending it to King Egelia after translating it.”

While thinking so, Reinhardt put the documents in his pocket.

“Now then, in that case the armory is most likely empty, don’t you agree? Well, let’s just try looking around there too.”

Beyond the storeroom for documents there seemed to be the armory. If you ask why Jin knew that, it’s because that was written on the door.

Because the door had become ancient, or maybe because it had been locked from the inside, in any case no matter how much Jin and Reinhardt pulled the door didn’t open.

As a last resort, Jin called out to Reiko.

“Reiko!”

Reiko who heard Jin’s voice immediately came.

“Yes, Father.”

“Try opening this door, please.”

“Yes.”

Reiko promptly pushed on the door, and forced it open in one go. The hinges creaked but somehow didn't break in the end.

“This is...”

The door was opened, and ahead were a number of unmoving golems stretched about. Dust had piled up, and both Jin and Reinhardt covered their nose and mouth with a handkerchief.

“Battle-type golems? No, they're simple household golems.

Jin examined the unmoving golems, and judged them to be not golems for battle but for household chores.

“Five golems, huh. Doesn't look like anything in particular is broken though.

Reinhardt also leaned over to check up on the golems. The magic lamps here were dark, and he couldn't see well so he didn't catch the details.

“Feels like they ran out of Magic Energy.”

But Jin refuted that.

“...No, that's wrong. Look at this. Come on.”

Jin opened the golem's chest and showed it. In there, a certain something was missing.

“There's no...Control Core?”

Reinhardt grasped the situation at a glance, and went to examine the other golems.

“This golem doesn't have one either.”

“Neither does this.”

The result of Jin's and Reinhardt's investigations was that out of the five golems, not a single one had a Control Core.

“It's impossible that the Control Cores just disappeared. That means that someone

disabled these golems, doesn't it look like that?"

"I wonder. That's the likeliest possibility though."

Even Jin didn't know what the truth was.

"These golems weren't that important. At least not something they'd take along while evacuating. If that's the case, it would be better to take only the most important part. ...Is the feeling I get."

Jin agreed with Reinhardt's conjecture and,

"There might be something about it in the documents from earlier, let's take a close look after we've returned."

He said in addition. He then heard Reiko's voice.

"Father, there's one more in the back."

"What?"

Jin shifted his attention to the back of the room Reiko spoke of, and he saw something like a human silhouette in the darkness.

"[Light]."

Jin brightened the place up, saw the human shape better. It was an Automata wearing old maid clothes. She had been left alone sitting on the floor. A similar amount of dust as on the golems had accumulated on her.

"An Automata, huh..."

Jin crouched to examine the Automata. He cleaned up the dust using magic.

Her build was that of an adult woman type. The [Magical Skin] used as skin still barely retained its flexibility.

Her hair was dark blue. Maybe the color was different from a human's on purpose.



“This one has a Control Core!”

Jin who had been investigating yelled out in surprise.

“The reason she isn’t moving...Lack of Magic Energy doesn’t seem likely.”

That’s because this Automata had an Ether Converter installed.

“Oh, I see. She received some kind of an impact, and the Magic Energy links inside snapped.”

At last Jin’s sharp powers of observation discovered the defective part.

“Alright, let’s repair her.”

If he knew where the fault was, there was no damage Jin couldn’t fix.

“[Joint], [Fusion].”

He joined the broken parts of the Magic Energy Circuit together, and mended the Magi Device that had begun disintegrating.

“Alright, [Start-up].”

Then after giving her enough Magic Energy for starting up, the Automata came to life.

While creaking a little, the Automata opened its eyes and stood up.

“Might you. Be the one. Who woke me. Up?”

Maybe the speech mechanism was broken as there were some pauses while the Automata spoke.

CHAPTER 16

BLUE-HAIRED ANN

The ancient Automata came to life and spoke. In other words, they were witnessing history, but.

“Mig. Ht. You. Be M. Y mast. Er? My. Na. Me. Is. Ann.”

The Automata knew her name was Ann, but regarding anything other than that,

“My. Apologies bu. T I. Do not. Have any. Other. Infor. Mation.”

She unfortunately said. As expected, even the Automata must’ve had her important information erased. It was an obvious measure against the possibility of capture by the enemy.

“Hmm, looks like there’s nothing more to see here.”

Reinhardt concluded after investigating the room where the golems were.

“And so, what are you going to do about these golems and that Automata?”

At that moment, a voice could be heard from the passage they had come through.

“Hoh, hohahahahaha! Extraordinary! Most extraordinary! Good work, and thank you!”

It was the self-proclaimed archeologist they had met during the day, Rucall.

“Rucall! Why are you here!”

Reinhardt asked and Rucall laughed again.

“Hahaha, didn’t I tell you I’m investigating these ruins? For the sake of the Unifilers!”

“The Unifilers!”

It turned out that Rucall was an underling of the Unifilers.

“During the day, I thought you weren’t ordinary people, so I sent a report by pigeon. Then in the evening, a reply arrived. To my surprise, Reinhardt and Jin, you’re the two

talented people we Unifilers have our eyes on, aren't you!"

In his excitement Rucall fluently talked on and on.

"Shouldn't I then loyally offer this finding, along with you two to the Unifilers! Uhahahahaha!"

Rucall let out a laugh like he had gone mad.

Then, Jin felt a light tug on his sleeve and turned around to look. There was the Automata from just now, Ann.

"Mas. Ter. Tha. T per. Son's. Stra. Nge st. Ate is..."

It was hard to comprehend and her voice was low, but Jin listened carefully to what Ann had to say.

"..."

"I see. It's good that you told me. Thanks, Ann."

Even after Jin finished listening to what Ann had to say, Rucall was still hooting and hollering while laughing.

"Uhahahahaha! Come on, you both, won't you come with me!"

Jin only had a single thing to say to Rucall.

"Make me."

"Huh?"

To Jin's cold reply, as you'd expect Rucall stopped smiling and had a strange look on his face.

"What, did you say?"

"I said make me, you fanatic."

Jin went even further.

“Unifilers? You really think you can do such a thing? In that case you aren’t even a fanatic. Just an idiot.”

After Jin went that far, Rucall’s face turned bright red and he flew into a rage.

“Wha-wha-wha-what are you saying? You bastard, do you even understand what you’re talking about?”

Jin said indifferently,

“Unifying the continent, right? In the first place, Dinar Kingdom’s rule extended over just a part of the continent at its most. And even though because of the population shortage it then couldn’t maintain itself, collapsed and turned into smaller nations, you say you want to unify the country into a one similar to that time’s with force? You make me laugh. Oh, I suppose Unifilers are then a comedy troupe?”

Even Reinhardt was wide-eyed in shock at the un-Jin-like sharp words, but it goes without saying that Rucall was the one who was most shocked.

“Wha-wha-what?”

“Do you have a poor memory? How many times do I have to say it?”

“You’re making fun of me!”

“Yeah, that I am.”

“D-d-damn you!”

“You’re red like a lobster...Oh, if I say it like that you probably won’t understand. Oh yeah, you’re like a boiling kettle.”

“Argh!”

“H-hey, Jin?”

Reinhardt said worriedly as Jin was acting unusual. Jin replied with a low voice.

“Ssh. Wait just a bit longer.”

“O-okay.”

“Rather than magicians, aren’t Unifilers a group of idioticians?”

“U-uaaaaaaaaargh!”

“N. Ow.”

At Ann’s mark, Jin fired a spell.

“[Stun].”

“Agh!?”

Then Rucall collapsed on the spot.

“Ohh, it should be over now.”

Jin took a breath and Reinhardt asked a question.

“Jin, what was that magic just now?”

“Ah, you mean [Stun]? It’s a magic that, utilizing lightning magic, gives the other party an electric shock for barely an instant, paralyzing them. It’s effective against human opponents.”

Jin explained and Reinhardt admired,

“Hmm, is that also a benefit from ‘science’? You make me want to take lessons in science from you more and more, Jin.”

“Yeah, when we’ve got the chance.”

Jin had also come to think that way little by little.

“First is this guy.”

Using the fainted Rucall’s own robe they tied him up. They tied him up and Reinhardt asked Jin a question seeming marvelled.

“Hey Jin, earlier when you faced this guy you stirred him up a lot, but was there a reason behind that?”

Jin nodded. He then replied to Reinhardt with a question.

“Did you feel that his response was somehow strange?”

“Hm? Yeah, come to think of it. But isn’t that what you’d expect from a religious fanatic?”

Reinhardt replied, but Jin said no.

“Try to remember. Dominique too felt like that when she showed her true colors, right?”

Reinhardt tried recollecting what happened that time. And then he thought that indeed, maybe what they both had in common was their seeming abnormal excitement.

“Well, she did get so upset that I thought it strange.”

He replied and Jin said that’s exactly what he felt like, and nodded.

“Well, I hear that there’s a possibility that that might be because of the influence of [Hypno].”

“What’s [Hypno]?”

It could very well be described as a version of hypnotism magic. But where did Jin get that information, Reinhardt was surely thinking. Then he noticed that the Automata was next to Jin and,

“Could it be, you heard it from that Automata?”

He asked. Jin smiled and replied to confirm.

“Yeah. Ann told me that.”

Ann began to begin the supplementary explanation, or so they thought, when unexpectedly the one who began to speak was Reiko who had moved next to Ann without anyone noticing.

“The magic known as [Hypno] is something that appears to manipulate targeted people as one pleases, but that is not the case.”

“Eh?”

It was a detail both Jin and Reinhardt were hearing for the first time.

“In the case of [Hypno], manipulating everything about the target person is

impossible. Then speaking of what it is able to do, it can guide the target's actions. In other words, in Rucall's case he was made to continue investigating the ruins, see."

The two reached comprehension then.

"Ah, so that's why in spite of not having any results, he spent ten years in a place like this."

Usually, one wouldn't be in ancient ruins that seemed to hold nothing to find for ten years. The two felt much better knowing the reason for that.

"In addition, having him report to the Unifilers supporting him, that much it can do."

"I see. So, why did you know he was affected by [Hypno]?"

Reinhardt asked the most pressing question and,

"The person under [Hypno] enters a light state of agitation with things regarding the party who bestowed them with their 'goal' and 'directions'."

She explained. Indeed, Jin said and nodded once.

"Is that so. Certainly at that time Dominique also felt like that."

"Rucall wasn't just in a light state of agitation though."

There was also a reply to Reinhardt's doubts.

"It appeared to be the degree of excitement associated with orders instilled forcibly."

"I see. In that case, doesn't that mean Rucall wasn't originally a Unifiler. But why stir him up so much?"

Reinhardt's question was only natural. At that time even to Jin, Ann had only told him to provoke Rucall. And the answer to that question was,

"That is because if the affected person receives a shock when they have reached their highest state of agitation, they wake up from [Hypno]."

And that was Ann's explanation conveyed through Reiko.

"You mean that therefore, there's a possibility that Rucall will wake up from [Hypno] now. Alright, shall we try waiting until he comes to?"

CHAPTER 17

BIRTHDAY

While they were waiting for Rucall to come to, Jin turned to face Reiko and,

“Reiko, you knew what Ann was going to say?”

He asked. Just now, she had explained instead of Ann whose speech device had a defect.

“Yes, Father. This girl is something like a cousin to me so with Magic Energy synchronization she could speak by proxy.”

“A cousin?”

Jin didn’t really understand what she meant.

“Yes. She and I share the same baseline design. I think it is likely that her design’s foundation is of the same family as that which Mother used. That’s why I can feel the Magic Energy waves and speak for her by just touching her like this.”

Maybe it would be fine to think of it as like two radios with nearly the same frequencies catching each other’s signal. At any rate, it turns out it’s possible for Reiko to talk for Ann. Maybe because of this she wasn’t especially jealous towards Ann, which had Jin feeling relieved.

“Hmm, I see.”

Jin was satisfied, but question marks still floated above Reinhardt’s head.

“Jin, what does that mean? Please explain it so that I can understand too.”

Jin apologized to Reinhardt.

“Oh, sorry Reinhardt. It’s supposition but, this Ann and Reiko have the same design. Of course the details differ, but the foundation is the same. That’s why she could be said to be Reiko’s cousin.”

“Hmm, in that case is Reiko-ch... Miss Reiko built according to ancient designs like

her?”

Jin tried to remember just how he had explained Reiko to Reinhardt, but, he couldn't remember. He had the hunch that he had told Beana she was an Artifact Jin had found, but he felt somehow hazy about what he had told Reinhardt.

“Yeah. Originally Reiko was an Artifact-class Automata, but when I found her she was pretty damaged. And so, while keeping the design as it was, I rebuilt her using new materials and that's the current Reiko.”

Explaining it like that apparently satisfied Reinhardt, as he nodded his head on a grand scale multiple times and said,

“I see, now I understand better. I can also understand why Reiko-ch...Miss Reiko has such a high power.”

“Reinhardt, you don't have to call her a 'miss' after all this time. Right, Reiko?”

“...Yes.”

There was a slight delay, but as it was Jin's instructions and she didn't feel particularly animous towards Reinhardt either Reiko agreed.

“Is that so, thanks, Reiko-chan.”

“...No problem.”

“Ann, I'll give you maintenance later.”

“Y. es. Th. Ank y. Ou v. Ery Muc. H.”

During their bustling, the fainted Rucall made a slight movement. The first one to notice was Reinhardt.

“Hey, you awake?”

Reinhardt tried giving Rucall a few light slaps on his cheeks, and finally he opened his eyes.

“Ugh...Where is this?”

“We're inside the ancient ruins.”

“Ancient ruins?”

It appeared that a part of his memory had vanished, and so as the representative Reinhardt explained the events so far to him.

“Hmm, something like that... Certainly, I can faintly remember... I think. By the way, could you untie this?”

Rucall said, looking around at his body bound by the robe’s sleeves.

It seemed like he had returned to sanity, and so cautiously they untied the clothes binding him.

“Ohh, that’s more comfortable. Incidentally, you said this is inside ancient ruins?”

“That’s correct.”

“Hmm, I spent who knows how long searching for the secret of the ruins, and you who came here just today found it...I should just retire...”

So docile as if he was a different person from the one who was under the effects of [Hypno], this must’ve been Rucall’s true character.

“Alright, what’re you going to do after this?”

Reinhardt went back to square one. The investigation of the ruins was basically over, and it was past midnight by now.

“I’m a bit tired. I’ll go back to my cabin.”

Rucall told them that he lived in a cabin he had built near the ruins. Jin and Reinhardt also decided to first go back to the carriage and sleep until morning, then when it’s bright outside pay a visit to Rucall’s cabin.

“It would be good if Elsa was still asleep though.”

Reinhardt said. Jin also agreed, thinking that if she woke up and found that the two had disappeared, she would get angry.

And so they quickly returned to the carriage.

The result.

“Reinhardt-sama, Elsa is resting well.”

The two felt relieved. So as not to wake the sleeping Elsa, they both silently entered the carriage, reclined their seats and began to nap.

Reiko and Ann were outside the carriage. Reiko didn't let down her guard, and Ann too was acting as a sentry with her body's abnormal condition.



The next morning.

“Leaving me behind you two went to the ancient ruins. You're both terrible.”

Sure enough, after Elsa had woken up and noticed Ann outside, they ended up having to explain just where she had come from.

“Sorry, Elsa. You looked to be sleeping so well, so I thought it would've been rude to wake you up.”

“Liar.”

“There could've been danger, so I didn't want to take you to such a place. Please understand, Elsa.”

“I don't.”

The angry Elsa was unapproachable.

With nothing else to do they decided to first put in order the breakfast preparations.

Using the stove Jin had made they boiled water and made soup. By dipping sliced bread in the soup it became a simple breakfast.

Because they hadn't expected that the village would be this empty, the soup was thin but there was nothing to do about it.

“Well, this is good too once in a while.”

While saying so Reinhardt glimpsed at Elsa's direction, but her mood didn't seem to

have improved.

Considering the atmosphere, Reiko dropped a bombshell announcement of sorts.

“Father, isn’t today your birthday?”

“Eh?”

“Huh?”

“I-is that how it was?”

Remarked Elsa, Reinhardt and Jin, in that order.

“Yes. There is no doubt that Father’s birthday is today, on the first of April.”

Jin’s information which he had copied to Reiko included his birthday.

By coincidence, the day Jin was summoned to this world was also the same first of April. It was Jin’s birthday in two ways.

“Aah, I’m 21 too now, huh.”

It had also now been a whole year since Jin came to this world.

“I-is that so. Jin, today, let’s go back to Yada Village and celebrate.

Reinhardt said, looking disconcerted.

“No, it’s fine, I’m already 21 so.”

But Jin didn’t look particularly happy.

“Don’t mind that. It’s the day to celebrate the day Jin-kun was born. That’s a very important day.”

Elsa said.

Elsa was supposed to be angry, but after hearing today was Jin’s birthday she seemed to have inadvertently forgotten about it.

“I-I guess so.”

In the first place, Jin who was from an orphanage had birthday parties until the end of

his lower grades of primary school. After that he was on the side of those who threw the parties.

And so, Jin who wasn't used to being celebrated could only hide his embarrassment.

First of all, they were going to visit Rucall's cabin, and after talking return to Yada Village, and this time they left together with Elsa.

En route, there was a great sound as if something something was broken, after which it once more became silent.

"What could've that been, just now?"

"I don't know. Reiko, don't lower your guard."

For now Jin gave Reiko orders, and while wary of their surroundings they moved towards Rucall's cabin.

That cabin was 50 meters away from the ruins along the cliff in a sunken place.

But.

"What is this?"

The cabin was crushed as if it had been trampled on by a giant foot.

Rucall was nowhere to be seen. Was he crushed along with the cabin, or did he escape? As they couldn't see any blood, they preferred to think he had managed to escape.

"At any rate, nothing we can do about something like this."

"You're right, shall we go back to the carriage for now?"

While feeling not quite alright, Jin's group returned to the carriage, told about it to Ann and the bulter Claude, and tried hearing their opinions.

Thereupon Ann made an outrageous statement.

"Sure. Ly thi. S Ca. N't me. An that. The Gigantes. Is. Ta. King a. Ction?"

CHAPTER 18

GIGANTES

“Gigantes’?”

Jin and Reinhardt both asked for an explanation for the word they were unaccustomed to hearing.

Judging that the explanation would be long, Reiko once more got close to Ann for Magic Energy synchronization and began explaining instead of Ann.

“During the anti-demon-race war...Anti-demon-race war seems to mean The Great Magic War...the Gigantes was a weapon that was developed in its final moments.”

It seems that at that time, people called it the anti-demon-race war.

“However, the Gigantes was faulty. Because it did not listen at all to what its manufacturers said.”

“So, what kind of weapon is these Gigantes?”

Jin had a somewhat bad feeling about this so he urged her to continue.

“The Gigantes is a giant human-type weapons with overall height of ten meters.”

Hearing that, even Jin was surprised. He didn’t know that such a thing existed. Because it was a weapon developed after the predecessor’s death during the Great Magic War.

“Is it a golem?”

“No. Gigantes is Gigantes.”

“Please describe its features in detail.”

Reinhardt said, his face also pale.

“Gigantes’s shape is similar to a human’s but its shoudlers are wider, legs shorter, and arms thicker and longer. Its height is ten meters, and its weight about 30 tons.”

“What an enormous golem.”

Reinhardt muttered, but Reiko –that is, Ann– denied it.

“No, that’s incorrect. That’s because Gigantes is assembled out of simple rock fragments.”

“Assembled out of rock fragments...”

Jin tried picturing it. He got the feeling that the word ‘golem’ referred to such a creature in his previous world. In the orphanage there had been a single game console and in a game he played on it there had been such a monster.

“There was a something like that in there?”

No one in remembered seeing a giant like that inside the discovered ruins.

“No, Gigantes’s [Core] was supposed to have been sealed.”

“[Core]? Not a [Control Core]?”

Jin thought he might have misheard. A Core was the core devil beasts had.

“A Core. Because Gigantes is an ‘artificial devil beast’.”

“An ‘artificial devil beast’?”

Another phrase he hadn’t heard made its appearance.

“Yes. An artificial devil beast made to oppose the devil race.”

“An eye for an eye or something like that, huh.”

Jin crossed his arms and pondered.

Judging from how Reiko is reading her mind, the Automata Ann’s memories don’t seem to be erased after all, he concluded. Most likely, like Reiko’s had, her Control Core must’ve reached the end of its technical life, making the the reading of information unstable. Unreasonably pushing her now could have unfortunate consequences for the ‘lost information’ he had finally attained. That was Jin’s conclusion.

Although despite that, it wasn’t possible to perfectly repair Ann here and now.

Jin urgently began examining the Automata Ann. While Reinhardt assisted him.

Elsa was at her wit's end when she saw Jin's expression, and stayed silent to not be on the way.

Her steel skeleton had rusted, several joints had stopped operating, and the leather of some unrecognizable devil beast used as her muscles was torn in countless places.

Her coating of Magical Skin was a composite material but it too had worn out.

Jin judged that it had been nearly 350 years since she had been constructed. Even the Great Magic War had been 300 years ago, she was older than that.

Probably because her materials' quality was generally worse compared to Reiko's, so after 350 years they had reached their limits. First of all, he did temporary repairs on the Magi Crystal working as the diaphragm of her vocal apparatus.

Nonetheless, by just pasting together the cracked Magi Crystal with [Fusion], the vocal apparatus that was reaching the end of its life span would break completely in the near future.

"Ann, what was the person who built you like?"

Jin decided to try asking.

"Yes, I was mass-produced and so I do not have a particular creator."

Her way of talking improved considerably, so she no longer needed Reiko's help.

"So there was something like a mass production plant, huh."

"Yes, secretary Automata like me and battle-type golems and such were built in the factory."

And the foundation of those designs was most likely based on his predecessor's work, Jin guessed.

"Heyy, Jin, this Ann has an amazing structure, I've learned some things!"

Even Reinhardt seemed surprised when he looked at Ann's structure.

But there was a more pressing problem.

“Now then, please tell me everything you know about Gigantes.”

“Yes. Using the Magic Energy stored in its Core, Gigantes constructs its body from surrounding rock fragments. As long as Magic Energy remains in its Core it can reform endlessly.”

It was rather similar to the golem in the game Jin had played.

“Well then, was the Core of Gigantes in the room you were in, Ann?”

“I do not know. That’s because I wasn’t given any more information about it.”

That was all the information, and Reinhardt put it all together into a guess.

“Anyway, somewhere in the ancient ruins was the Core of Gigantes, and because of some vital reason it activated and came alive. Then it crushed the nearby cabin of Rucall underfoot.”

That seemed to be the gist of things. The important thing right now was not to determine the root cause but the locations of Gigantes. They were also worried about Rucall.

Although it was too late now, they regretted they had foolishly left the ruins wide open. However there was nothing to do about their negligence any more.

“Hmm, you said it was faulty and didn’t listen to what its manufacturers said? How did it turn out?”

Reinhardt asked hoping that the answer was just it didn’t do as it was told, but that wish didn’t come true.

“Yes, it turned out that once activated, it didn’t made no distinction between friend and foe and attacked.”

The worst case. Cold sweat trickled down Reinhardt’s back.

“And because of that, its only way of use was throwing the Core right in the middle of enemies. ”

It stands to reason that it was somewhat usable in situations where it had no allies

around it.

“Are there any principles or anything like that behind how it moves, or rampages, or maybe attacks?”

Suddenly a question like that came to Jin’s mind and he tried asking.

“Yes, for some reason it goes towards high places.”

For some reason Jin remembered the saying ‘Only idiots, smoke, and goats rise to high places’. As Gigantes wasn’t smoke or a goat, then it must be...

“So that means that after crushing Rucall’s cabin, it climbed up the mountain.”

Reinhardt crossed his arms and thought.

“The question is what are we going to do. Will we leave it be, or try to do something by ourselves? Or tell the proper authorities?”

“We’re responsible for letting it out. If there’s anything we can do, I want to do it.”

Jin’s opinion was to exterminate it themselves. Well, with Reiko it probably wouldn’t be a big problem, and Reinhardt also agreed.

“If we waste time then the damage may increase, so.”

Then they began the talk about who would participate in chasing down Gigantes, and Elsa said she also wanted to come.

“I want to go too because you didn’t take me with you into the ruins.”

“No, it’s not a leisure trip, it’ll be dangerous.”

Reinhardt tried persuading her but still she didn’t listen.

“Elsa, neither me or Reinhardt want to expose you to danger. So please just stay here. I beg you.”

Jin clapped his hands together in front of his face and bowed like he was praying. The gesture was unknown to Elsa but she could still understand Jin’s feelings.

“...Okay. Today is Jin-kun’s birthday, so I’ll listen to him.”

“Thanks, Elsa.”

Finally Elsa agreed. Besides, currently Elsa was wearing a skirt. It wasn't suited for mountain climbing.

Jin and Reinhardt put their preparations in order. Although the preparations were only walking sticks for mountain climbing, rope, and water.

They made the sticks from wood. That kind of handiwork was their strongest point.

“Now then, we'll be going.”

“Take care. You both.”

“Reinhardt-sama, Jin-dono, be careful. You mustn't overdo it.”

The butler Claude saw them off along with Elsa, then Jin and Reinhardt headed towards the mountain. Accompanying them was Reiko. This time she was holding 'Peach Blossom'.

Ann was house-sitting with Elsa and Claude. It seemed like if Ann was about to do something like mountain climbing right now, she'd fall into pieces.

With Reiko in the lead, Jin's group continued while looking for the paths that seemed easy to walk.

“*Gasp*...*Pant*”

“*Wheeze* *Wheeze*”

Jin and Reinhardt were both bad at mountain climbing. Reiko jumped from rock to rock up the mountain as if it was the most natural thing, then came back down, advising them like,

“Father, the path leading right seems to be the easiest to ascend”

Or,

“The rock there is brittle, so please be careful.”

After roughly 30 minutes of climbing there was a relatively flat terrace, and they

decided to take a breather. They both drank the water they brought and breathed in deep.

“Ahh, I knew it but this really is intense.”

“Yeah, in my home country I climbed a few mountains too, but this is my first time on a rocky mountain like this.”

They had a conversation like that, but they couldn’t stay resting forever and the two again began the climb.

When they encountered a crag that seemed impossible to climb, Reiko cut the rock to pieces with the Peach Blossom in her hand, making footholds. Thanks to that in an hour the summit was in sight.

“Ooh, there’s the summit.”

At that moment, Reiko who had climbed up near the summit gave a signal.

“Father, there is a large footprint here. The target maybe nearby.”

CHAPTER 19

THE SUPER-TECHNOLOGY OF THE PAST

“*Huff*, *puff*, *wheeze*, *gasp*”

After finally arriving at the location where Reiko had found the footprint, Jin and Reinhardt looked at the ‘footprint’ and were surprised.

“Isn’t it over ten meters tall judging from the size of this?”

It was that gigantic. However, Reiko shook her head and,

“No, according to Ann’s information it appears that its feet are large to keep it stable. And therefore...”

She said and was about to continue when.

“You guys! Why are you here!?”

A voice yelled at them from above. They looked up, and for some reason it was Rucall who had come missing.

Jin and Reinhardt hurriedly climbed up there. Reiko jumped there in just a single leap.

“You disappeared so we came to look for you!”

Jin said. It wasn’t a lie. Rucall scratched his hairless head and,

“Well, sorry about that. After having breakfast I went to take a little look at the ruins. And then on in the middle of a passage’s wall there was a cave, where a sealed box had been left.”

Rucall explained the particulars.

“It was securely sealed but by giving it Magic Energy it opened by itself. I noticed that a black Magi Crystal tumbled out, but then it began taking in surrounding rocks and grew very fast, I ran away in a panic, that guy trampled my cabin, then went towards the mountain. And so I stealthily chased after it, that’s about it.”

He said and finished explaining.

“So, where is it?”

Reinhardt asked, and Rucall silently pointed towards the direction of the sun, namely the eastern mountainside.

“It went and climbed up there.”

“Alright, let’s pursue it.”

Jin said and Rucall got nervous and,

“H-hey, don’t tell me you’re planning to stop or destroy it?”

He said. Jin gave it to Rucall straight.

“That’s right. Apparently it’s a secret weapon from the Great Magic War called Gigantes. Moreover, I hear it’s faulty and goes around destroying things without discrimination. If it’s not stopped now, it’ll be too late to prevent damage to the surroundings.”

“Bu-but, can you beat it?”

“I don’t know, but I’ll have a go at it.”

Reinhardt said. Reiko and Jin went to continue climbing the mountain ridge.

The footprints did indeed point towards the east along the ridge. The two kept began walking up following it. Reiko once more was both the scout and the vanguard.

Rucall didn’t move from the spot and,

“...Can they really beat a monster like that...?”

He just whispered.



The path on the mountain ridge was easier to walk than the one until now. Furthermore, the parts where Gigantes had walked had been flattened as if it had been graded, they were even more easy to walk on.

“Ah, the wind feels nice.”

“It dries the sweat.”

The mountain wind dried the sweat they had perspired during the climb. The two increased their pace.

After continuing for about ten minutes, Reiko motioned with her hand for them to stop.

“Beyond this point...it’s there.”

After this the mountain ridge sank and formed a so-called double ridge, and the gap between the ridges was wide.

Looking closely, a part of it was moving.

“So that’s Gigantes!”

It was a gigantic human shape with body completely covered in rock. The very shape that Ann had described.

It was walking slowly, moving towards the summit ahead.

“Can we stop it?”

Reinhardt said worriedly.

“Let’s try at the very least. Reiko, try tossing a stone from here as a test.”

“Yes, Father.”

Reiko picked up a rock of a perfect size for her small hand, faced towards Gigantes and threw the stone at 20 percent power.

“Ooh?”

The thrown stone smashed into the rock that composed Gigantes’s body, the stone smashed into small pieces and a part of Gigantes’s body was also smashed up. However, it took in as much rock from the surroundings as it needed, and in the blink of an eye the damage portion was completely repaired.

“Hmm, now that’s a golem.”

Even at this point Jin had a thought like that. Reiko launched a second stone as large

as a handball.

This time a sound like a clink could be heard, and a a larger piece of rock than before popped off Gigantes, but it too was quickly repaired.

“That reformation ability sure is troublesome.”

Jin and Reinhardt were both of the same mind. But just how fast could it repair itself thought Jin, and instructed Reiko to throw a large boulder.

Reiko easily lifted up a stone at least five times larger than herself, and tossed it at Gigantes. Rather than in a parabola, the giant boulder flew in a straight line and directly hit Gigantes without error.

“No use, huh.”

At the shock Gigantes stumbled, the boulder smashed into pieces, its body smashed into pieces, and before you could tell which was which it had completely repaired itself.

“I guess smaller attacks would be useless then.”

Reiko had her katana Peach Blossom, but even if a piece was cut off it too would probably regenerate. In the first place, this location where there was nothing but rocks was most advantageous for Gigantes.

“In that case, how about attacking with magic!”

Reinhardt took out his Wand charged with magic, aimed at Gigantes and shot off a spell.

“[Flame Lance]!”

Just by inserting Magic Energy to it, with a Wand charged with magic one could instantly fire the spell. The high-level fire magic [Flame Lance] hit Gigantes.

“So not even that works.”



The rock warmed by the high-temperature flames melted and dripped off, but soon it was replenished by the surrounding stones, not able to make a decisive blow.

Moreover, Gigantes finally noticed that there was an enemy here, changed its course, and slowly began walking towards them.

“Its reactions are slow, though.”

Its enemy recognition was too slow. This must’ve been one of the reasons why it was a failed work too.

Yet they didn’t have that much time to take it easy. The ten-meter tall Gigantes who was approaching was rather intimidating.

“I’ll destroy it personally!”

Reiko leapt out to strike Gigantes.



“Jin-kun, Rai-nii, I’m worried.”

The left behind Elsa was worrying endlessly inside the carriage. In front of her was the Automata Ann.

“Hey, does Gigantes have, no weak points?”

For some reason the two had left without asking that.

“Weak points? If it runs out of Magic Energy it becomes unable to maintain its body. Its reactions are slow. It has no intelligence.”

It was rather useless information. But, the first thing said, if it runs out of Magic Energy, was stuck in Elsa’s mind.

“Gigantes, how does it get its Magic Energy?”

She tried asking. And thereupon Ann gave her an astonishing answer.

“By touching things, the surrounding air, or cast magic, it can absorb it from many sources. That’s why its use was to be anti-devil race.”

Against the devil race to whom Magic Energy is an indispensable requirement for living, it was extremely effective, Ann explained. After hearing that an ill premonition hit Elsa.

“In that case, what if a golem or something attacked it?”

“Yes. It would not be useful against Gigantes, I think. Because just by touching it could absorb Magic Energy from the opponent.”

Hearing that, Elsa felt the blood draw from her face.

“Then, in that case, would an Automata like you be no good too?”

She tried asking as if clinging to a single ray of hope.

“Yes. If it’s an Automata, Gigantes will completely absorb its Magic Energy. Someone like me would become unable to move just like that.”

The trump card of Jin and Reinhardt was Reiko. Reiko was an Automata that moved with Magic Energy.

“Jin, kun....”

With uneasy eyes Elsa faced towards the mountain where Jin and Reinhardt went.



Reiko was going to strike Gigantes. Gigantes raised its leg to meet its enemy.

Reiko’s fist bashed Gigantes’s leg to destroy it, or so it seemed, but.

“...?...”

In the instant she touched Gigantes’s leg, for just a moment Reiko stopped moving, and immediately afterwards she was kicked flying by Gigantes’s leg.

“Ah.”

The difference in weight was upwards of 50-fold. And so Reiko sailed through the air in an arc, and just like that fell below a cliff.

CHAPTER 20

SAFETY FACTOR

“Reiko”

Jin’s cry echoed.

Reiko had fallen down a cliff with a sharp drop. The height difference was over 100 meters.

Gigantes slowly approached Jin and Reinhardt.

“I can’t believe that Reiko couldn’t win.”

Reinhardt’s face was pale.

“This bastard, to my Reiko...”

At the moment when was about to fire off a maximum-power [Laser].

“I’m sorry, Father. I got careless.”

Reiko had jumped up the cliff and come back.

Jin stopped casting magic and,

“Reiko! Are you okay?”

He asked worriedly. Reiko waved both her hands and,

“Yes, nothing has broken.”

She said and gave Jin peace of mind.

“Father, won’t you leave that to me?”

Said Reiko standing in front of Jin, she seemed angry.

“Even if it was for a moment, I caused Father worry. It’s my duty to fix that.”

She said and ran off without even waiting for Jin’s reply. Jin looked at her back and,

“Reiko! Do what you want to do! But this time don’t lose!”

He called out to her.

After hearing Jin’s yell, Reiko increased her Ether Converter’s output to 40 percent.

It was as if she turned into a small bullet as she rammed Gigantes with her body. Even Gigantes was felled by that shock.

“Oh, did she do it?”

Reinhardt let out a small shout of joy, but, Gigantes grasped Reiko tightly with both its arms.

In comparison to her body, Gigantes’s hands were thick and large. In proportion to the hands’ size, it held down Reiko with ease.

Then while Gigantes sucked Magic Energy from Reiko to strengthen its own body, it tightened its grip on Reiko trying to destroy her.

Creaking and grating sounds came out from either Reiko or from Gigantes.

“Reiko!”

At Jin’s shout Reiko turned to face him just once, and showed a sweet smile. Like saying there was nothing to worry about.

Then Reiko increased her Ether Converter’s output to 80 percent.

“Wh-what?”

Reinhardt let out a bewildered voice.

That was only natural, as he saw something like a thin light shining around Gigantes. It was a side effect of when an enormous amount of Ether transforms into Mana.

Gigantes’s special characteristic was taking in Mana from the outside, and converting it to Magic Energy with its Mana Driver, making the energy its own.

Of course there was an upper limit. That was decided by the Mana Driver's capacity.

Right now, Reiko's Ether Converter had entered full operation to supply Mana to both Reiko and Gigantes.

"So you've still got some leeway. ...How about this!"

Reiko finally increased her Ether Converter's output to 100 percent.

Gigantes pressed on Reiko even harder.

"You can stand even this, huh. In that case!"

Reiko increased her Ether Converter's output to 110 percent, then 120 percent.

It was a drastic move he made because she had complete faith in Jin and Jin's craftsmanship.

130 percent, 140 percent.

Machines' structures have something called a safety factor or a factor of safety.

An example of a safety factor is a truck with load capacity of 10 tons being able to handle a load of 12 tons without breaking.

And so designs with no leeway have a low safety factor, and designs with leeway have a larger safety factor. There's also the balance with costs.

So, how do you think Reiko is?

Jin's beloved daughter Reiko to whom he poured his heart's blood making her utilized world's top-class materials and manufacturing processes, and the basis of her design was by the previous generation Magi Craft Meister, Adrianna Balbora Ceci.

The opposing Gigantes was an urgently constructed mass-produced trial product in a war against the devil race. There was no way Reiko would fall behind it in the degree of perfection, durability, or reliability.

There was no way a Magi Craft Meister's beloved daughter would lose against a faulty mass-produced product.

At least, that's how Reiko believed.

150 percent, 160 percent.

The rock comprising Gigantes's body was tinged with heat. The reason was that the Mana Driver had passed its permissible limits.

170 percent, 180 percent.

The surroundings of Gigantes and Reiko were shining with dazzling light. It was just the surplus energy of when Ether was converted to Mana.

"H-hey, Jin, will Reiko-chan really be fine?"

Reinhardt who was watching seemed to still be worried. Jin himself couldn't help but worry. But she had faith in the smile Reiko had shown earlier, and was only watching attentively.

190 percent.

A snapping sound resounded.

200 percent.

Something was smashed up inside Gigantes. Simultaneously its body changed into simple rock and crumbled apart. There was no phenomenon of radiation any more.

Reiko lowered her output all the way to her regular 5 percent, then dusted off the dirt clinging to her body.

She then faced Jin and quickly bowed her head,

"I've caused you worry."

She made a brief comment. Jin rushed over to Reiko,

"Reiko! Are you okay! Are you injured anywhere?"

He asked while gasping.

"Yes, I'm fine. ...Father, I'm an Automata so please say broken or damaged instead of

injured.”

Reiko replied. To such Jin replied,

“Idiot, I told you earlier didn’t I, that you’re my daughter. That’s why I’m talking about injuries.”

“Yes, thank you very much.”

Reinhardt watched the exchange in silence, but,

“Jin, Reiko-chan, shall we go back soon? Elsa’s must be worried too.”

He called out to them. Jin was in agreement with that.

“Got it. Reiko, does Gigantes have a core or anything like that left?”

“I’ll investigate.”

Reiko immediately walked over to the rock fragments that had comprised Gigantes, dug them up and eventually she seemed to have found something.

“Father, there was nothing more than this.”

She said and handed over fragments of a Magi Crystal.

“I thought so, that would happen if you poured in so much Mana.”

Jin muttered while holding the three small fragments in the palm of his hand.



From the summit that she had been watching with worry, pieces of rock came falling down.

“Could it be...They’re fighting?”

Elsa tightly grasped the hands she had crossed in front of her chest.

Then the summit’s area was engulfed in a strange light phenomenon.

“That’s...Magic Energy?”

For the light to be that bright, how much Magic Energy was it even. Elsa's face when white as a sheet with anxiety and worry.

But at that point, the strange phenomenon stopped already, and without means to know what had happened Elsa spent the time aching as if she had stomach pains.

But, when the sun was nearing the middle of the sky, the long-awaited sound of footsteps came.

"They came back."

Elsa jumped out of the carriage. Outside the butler Claude was waiting to greet his master Reinhardt.

"Jin-kun, Rai-nii."

The figures of the two, then Reiko appeared in sight of Elsa, who knit her brows seeing their state. That's because Jin and Reinhardt were both wounded.

Jin's palms were bloodstained, and both Reinhardt's knees had bled.

"It was a strong enemy after all?"

Elsa asked with worry and Reinhardt replied with a smile,

"Yeah, it was tough. But there's no need to worry any more. Reiko-chan beat it for us."

The Reiko in question was following Jin by him without having gone invisible.

"But you're hurt like that."

Elsa pointed out, while Jin smiled bitterly and said,

"Oh, this is from when we were coming down the mountain and we both fell. Our walking sticks and water also fell and disappeared somewhere."

After that explanation Elsa's expression became strained.

"Idiot. You worried me. It's good that you're both safe."

She then began to cry big drops of tears. Because of his bloody palms Jin refrained from touching Elsa, so Reinhardt was the one to hug and console her.

“Sorry about worrying you. But we’re back now, so don’t cry.”

Reinhardt said and calmed down Elsa a bit.

It goes without saying that after cleaning the wounds with water, they were healed by Elsa’s healing magic.

CHAPTER 21

PARTY

After destroying Gigantes, Jin's group had looked for Rucall on the way back, but in the end they didn't find out where he had gone.

Maybe he was still under watch by the Unifilers. But as he wasn't a child, him disappearing wasn't a worry for Jin.

From under Rucall's cabin they also found splinters of a box that appeared to be from the one that had sealed Gigantes's Core.

According to the ancient writing on it, it was left behind as a trap in the case of the devil race finding the ancient ruins.

That's why Magic Energy inserted just out of curiosity had activated Gigantes.

As the Unifilers surely had come to know about the ancient ruins, they returned all the materials to the golems that were left behind to make it seem like there was a chance there were other unknown secrets. Because the materials weren't particularly valuable, it wasn't a great regret.

Because they also completely rewrote the magic formation of the Warp Gate, even if it was for example reconstructed, it wouldn't function normally. On the contrary, it might behave wildly.

In the future, if the Unifilers's members hear news from Rucall and come to investigate, they'll gain nothing, or actually, they'll probably go back with with an unexpected souvenir.

Jin's group peacefully left towards Yada Village.

"Surely the number one find is Ann."

Jin said on the subject, Reinhardt also agreed and tapped on his breast pocket.

“This record of the Great Magic War, it’s also valuable though.”

Jin once more looked back over at Ann and muttered.

“Anyhow, I’ve got to get to repairing her.”

“Mh-hm, that’s something only you can do, Jin. Please repair her without fail.”

However, Yada Village didn’t have the equipment for that.

“At any rate, you better repair her while we’re still in Egelia Kingdom.”

That was Reinhardt’s opinion. Right now Celuroa Kingdom was suspicious, so with Jin being the Honorary Magi Craftsman, while still in Egelia Kingdom Jin could probably borrow a workshop from somewhere, he added.

If he brought her to Hourai Island he would surely be able to completely repair her, but it was still a secret to Reinhardt’s group. Jin had gradually begun feeling that holding secrets was a bother, and had begun to want to open his heart to Reinhardt’s group.

Although the road was bad, the way back was downhill. By evening they had arrived at Yada Village.

Then once again, or more precisely as expected, Mine came running.

“Young lady! You were late so I’ve been worried!”

This time that was all, there was no disagreement towards Jin. Maybe she had learned a little.

“Aah, I’m somewhat tired.”

Jin who was vaguely worn-out went to his room in the inn and threw himself on the bed.

“Father, I will wake you up when dinnertime comes, so please rest even for a while.”

And so Jin accepted Reiko's offer, closed his eyes, and reflected on today's events.

About Ann.

About Gigantes.

The system that absorbed Mana. That had been dangerous. If Reiko hadn't been able to output so much power.

While thinking in circles about various things, before he knew it Jin had fallen asleep.



A knocking sound was heard. Then Jin opened his eyes.

He looked, and Reiko and Ann were going to open the door.

"Yes, what is it?"

After the door opened, the first to come in was Elsa.

"I came to pick up Jin-kun."

She said. On that subject, it was already dark outside, so it must be dinnertime.

Jin got up and walked towards the door, then noticed Elsa's outfit.

Her favourite chartreuse green dress. A rare flower decoration on her hair, and the brooch Jin had gifted her pinned on her chest.

"Elsa?"

Elsa turned to Jin who couldn't understand why she had dressed up like that for just a dinner in the inn, and presented her hand.

"To pick Jin-kun up, I said. Come on, let's go."

"U-huh."

After just waking up he was still muddleheaded, and took Elsa's hand...Or rather, Elsa took his and walked Jin to the dining room.

And when the moment they arrived at the dining room, Jin was greeted by applause.

There was Reinhardt, and his butler Claude. Elsa's butler, Adberg. Then somehow, even Mine was there, giving an applause.

"Jin-kun, happy, birthday."

Elsa said while holding Jin's hand.

Jin was wondering for a moment what was going on, but at last he seemed to have understood the situation,

"Everyone, t...Thanks."

He said, after great pains.

Elsa was the first to notice the trickle of tears coming out of his eyes.

"Jin, kun?"

While Elsa was worriedly peering at Jin's expression, he said to her,

"O-oh. It's nothing. I was just, thinking that it's been a while since my birthday was celebrated like this. And then you know."

Elsa led such Jin by the hand and,

"I was able to see an unexpected part of Jin-kun. Come on, this way."

She said, and had him sit on the head of the table appropriate for today's guest of honor. She herself sat next to him.

Reinhardt's maids immediately went around pouring wine for everyone, and when Reinhardt saw that everyone had had their wines poured,

"Well then, to our friend, Egelia Kingdom's Honorary Magi Craftsman, Jin Nidou's 21st birthday. Cheers!"

He led the group to a toast.

"Cheers!"

"Cheers!"

The participants followed up.

“Jin, I couldn’t arrange more than this on such short notice, but happy birthday.”

Reinhardt said, and once more tears welled up in Jin’s eyes.

“Thanks.”

He thought it stale, but he couldn’t get himself to say anything more.

“Here you go, Jin-kun.”

Seeing that his glass had become empty, Elsa poured some more herself.

“Thanks, Elsa.”

“Mm. All the time, in Jin-kun’s care, so.”

Giving such a reply, Elsa somehow seemed more mature.

Then Reinhardt left his seat and came over,

“Jin, as there was no time this is the only gift we could get you. Think of it as me representing everyone’s feelings, please have it.”

He said and presented a flat case the size of a business card to Jin.

“It’s a case for keeping your Guild registration card in.”

Now that he mentioned it, it was the perfect size for that. The material seemed to be silver. On the front there was a gold inlaying. It looked like it said Jin in ornamental writing. It must’ve been made by Reinhardt.

“Thanks, I’ll treasure it.”

Jin said, and put the case in his breast pocket.

Meanwhile, Elsa was diving the fruits.

“Here you go.”

“Thanks.”

This evening Jin said nothing but thanks, but it was strangely pleasant.

The evening's meal became the one of the most enjoyable meals Jin had had in his 21 years of living.

A warm wind typical of a spring evening blew across Yada village. April had come, and spring was in full swing.

From somewhere, Kherry petals came flying by the window, adding light pink to the colors.



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